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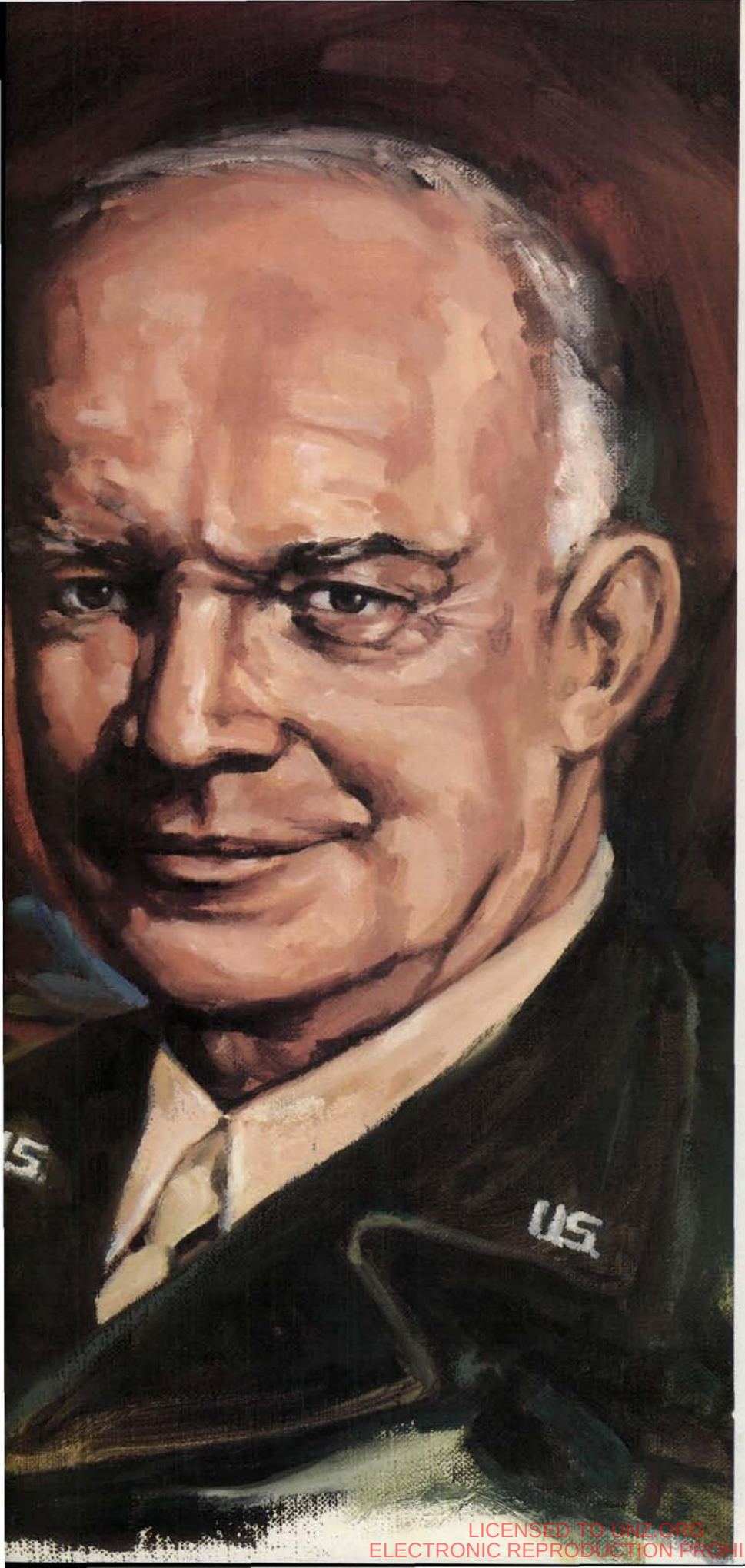

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FROM WASHINGTON

Substance Abuse

Who sez this campaign has no substance? There are now four reasonably concrete proposals on the table to address the concerns of the middle class, two each from Michael Dukakis and George Bush. We can even extract from them, if we squeeze hard, a bit of their proponents' governing philosophies.

Bush proposes to allow taxpayers earning less than $60,000 to sock away up to $1,000 a year and pay no tax on the interest until the money is withdrawn (if it's held for at least five years). Dukakis rightly ridicules this as small beer compared with the capital gains tax break Bush promises to rich people. Bush's own top economist, Michael Boskin, estimates a tax saving of up to $145 for someone who leaves his $1,000 untouched for ten years. By contrast the capital gains break would give an average benefit of $30,000 *per year* to taxpayers over $200,000.

It's worth noting that the break Bush so kindly proposes for working people's savings accounts is already built into the taxation of capital gains, which accumulate untaxed until the investment is liquidated. (If you die without cashing in, your heirs enjoy the gain tax-free—a loophole that costs the Treasury $5 billion a year.) Bush wants to go further and cut the top capital gains rate almost in half.

Bush says people who use his savings account break won't just be helping themselves, they "will be helping America—by increasing investment and economic growth." That is unlikely. Every study of similar schemes, such as IRAs, concludes that most of the money going into tax-sheltered accounts isn't the result of people saving more—it's money people were saving anyway. Meanwhile, how does Bush plan to make up the lost government revenue? Characteristically, he doesn't. Which means that every dollar of tax "incentive" is just one more dollar the government will have to borrow—draining the very pool of investment capital this arrangement is supposed to increase.

This savings scheme, plus a similar proposal to let people sock away money tax-free for their children's college tuition, are Bush's response to Dukakis's proposal to let people pay off their college costs through a Social Security tax surcharge. Although the Dukakis program as a whole would be designed to break even, higher-income people would end up paying back somewhat more than they owed, lower-income people somewhat less. (Bush's savings incentive, by contrast, is a better deal for higher-income people, since a tax deduction is worth almost double to those in the top bracket.)

Bush condemns the Dukakis tuition plan as a new tax burden in very thin disguise. He makes the same accusation against Dukakis's other prominent proposal: to require companies (with some exceptions) to provide health insurance for their employees. Bush asserts the health proposal would cost businesses $30 to $40 billion a year, and he may well be right. He's also right that both Dukakis proposals are, in effect, new taxes. A good chunk of that $30 to $40 billion will be passed on to customers.

So, yes: these two Dukakis proposals will cost society money. If Bush were making a principled argument here that it's not the federal government's concern whether the middle class can afford college tuition or whether all working people have health insurance (Dukakis's plan would cover 22 million of the 37 million currently uninsured), we could congratulate him for his honesty, respectfully disagree, and proceed to a stimulating debate on communal values versus individual liberty. But Bush is careful *not* to make just such a principled argument. Although he excoriates "liberals," he doesn't dare dissociate himself from these two patently liberal goals.

Instead, in the case of health insurance, he proposes (in a throwaway line during the first debate) that the working poor be invited to "buy into Medicaid." What this means, exactly, and how much it would cost, he thus far refuses to say. It's still being "staffed out," an adviser told the *Washington Post*. Another adviser offered the ludicrous figure of $200 million. An expert cited by the *Post* says $10 billion just to cover people up to the poverty line.

The point is that a year's health insurance, or a year's college tuition, costs

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CORRESPONDENCE

BURMESE BURDEN

To the editors:

In "Burma Breaks" (September 5), Andrew Sullivan raises the American "option of supplying military aid to the democratic insurgents." If there is any country in the world where we have no obligation or interest in "getting involved," it is Burma. Unlike the Philippines, which was our colony, Burma was a British colony; let Thatcher worry about it. Unlike Vietnam, we fought no war in Burma, created no refugees or Amerasians, damaged no infrastructures. Unlike Thailand, Korea, and the other "tigers" of Asia, Burma has promoted a socialist autarky since 1962, and thus it cannot be laid to our door that we penetrated their society with our multinationals and pernicious capitalist influence.

Please, we have enough on our plate for the moment.

WILLIAM J. PARENTE
Scranton, Pennsylvania

To the editors:

As Andrew Sullivan points out, U.S. involvement with Burma's military dictatorship has been disgraceful. The most appalling aspect has been the program in which the United States donated 2,4-D herbicide (an ingredient of Agent Orange) to the Burmese army. It is supposedly for an anti-narcotics program, but the army has used it to clear out "security risk" hill tribe noncombatants in its counterinsurgency campaigns. Meanwhile, with very high-level assistance, narcotics production has burgeoned. Recently, Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan stated, "In Ne Win perhaps we have been dealing with an Asian Noriega." The United States has a chance to redeem itself by encouraging democracy, peace, and development to benefit all of Burma and provide alternatives to the narcotics trade. The U.S. government has been a friend to Burma's dictator—can it now be a friend to Burma's people?

EDITH T. MIRANTE
Cranford, New Jersey

HEARING DIFFERENCES

To the editors:

Townsend Davis's piece on "The New Politics of Deafness" (September 12 & 19) is in error on many significant points as well as in its major conclusion—that U.S. citizens with disabilities should not be afforded the anti-discrimination protections of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. He says, "No one suggests anti-discrimination laws for the less intelligent. . . . Implementing laws to enforce such radical egalitarianism would entail huge economic costs." He appears oblivious to the fact that for the past 15 years, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 *has* banned discrimination on the basis of physical or mental disability (including mental retardation) in programs or activities receiving federal financial assistance, and Section 503 has outlawed employment discrimination by employers with federal contracts of $2,500 or more.

The courts have found the law to require only accommodations that do not impose "undue financial and administrative burdens." Contrary to Davis's assertion that " 'reasonable accommodation' means affirmative action," the Supreme Court took pains to point out in a 1979 decision (*Southeastern Community College* v. *Davis*) that the type of reasonable accommodation required by Section 504 does *not* constitute affirmative action. There is no reason to believe the Court's interpretation of the proposed law would be any different. What would differ is that the new law would apply to *all* employers over a certain size, not just those receiving federal money.

Davis quotes a student leader who said he would make himself deaf if he could hear as evidence of the "backfire" of the struggle for equal rights. What escapes his understanding, however, is that the student's words indicate a declaration of self-worth. Individuals with disabilities are faced daily with a public attitude that the only thing important about them is the part of their body that does not work correctly. Society would prefer to cure disabilities or keep them out of sight, rather than assume the more difficult task of accepting people with differences for what they are.

HENRY A. BEYER
ALLAN H. MACURDY
N. Neal Pike Institute for the Handicapped
Boston, Massachusetts

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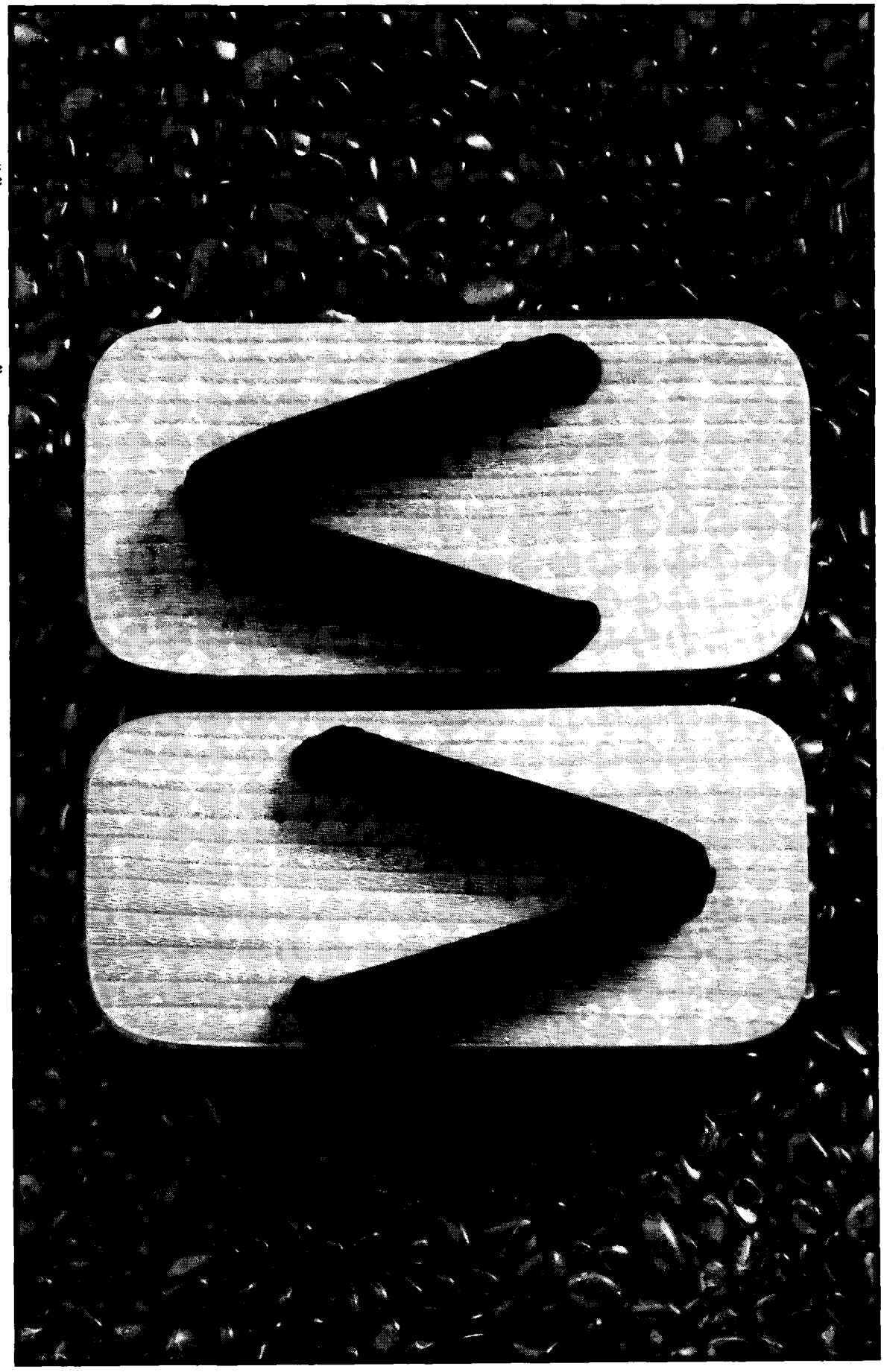

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THE NEW REPUBLIC
OCTOBER 24, 1988

BUSH'S CRIMINAL LOBBY

George Bush is a card-carrying member of the National Rifle Association. Among the NRA's past causes are opposition to a ban on plastic handguns (a position shared with airplane hijackers) and opposition to a ban on the sale of Teflon bullets, most useful for their ability to pierce policemen's protective vests. This may sound like an attempt to tar Bush by association, but that's not really necessary; Bush proudly stood by the NRA in opposing a plastic handgun ban. Why, then, isn't Michael Dukakis talking more about Bush's special-interest problem—slavish devotion to the NRA? Partly because the NRA began a couple of years ago to revamp its image, reversing itself on key issues after its increasingly apparent fanaticism began to alienate supporters. In 1986 it grudgingly accepted a bill outlawing machine-gun sales, and supported a ban on the sale of cop-killer bullets. This year, after a Senate plastic handgun ban had gained unstoppable momentum, the NRA did another backflip and signed on. But a few weeks ago, the NRA reclaimed its customary place on the fringe of American politics with its deft sabotage of the Brady amendment.

The amendment—named after James Brady, who was brain-damaged for life during the Reagan assassination attempt—called for a seven-day waiting period for anyone wanting to buy a handgun. The idea was to discourage impulse buying, which in the gun business can have regrettable consequences, and to give local police a chance to check the names of prospective gun buyers to make sure they aren't felons. Waiting periods exist in 22 states. There's no way of measuring how many suicides and crimes of passion have been averted, but a waiting period enabled California, for example, to stop 1,500 convicted felons from buying guns in 1986 alone. Does a waiting period dampen commerce and hurt gun dealers? Of course. And requiring a prescription for amphetamines hurts pharmaceutical companies. If you sell things that can kill people, expect to have the government looking over your shoulder.

In killing the Brady amendment, the NRA used a two-phase campaign. The first phase consisted of lies. A mass-mail campaign warned millions of gun owners that their representative was planning to vote for a liberal effort to impose "total, strict gun control on all America" that could cost "billions" of dollars. (The Congressional Budget Office estimate was $5 million to $10 million.) The bill's sponsors, according to these letters, wanted "the police to visit your home before you can buy a firearm." The truth is that police would have the *option* of reviewing the names and addresses of prospective gun buyers. *If* they used it, and *if* a buyer turned out to be a felon, they might well visit his home, since it would be a crime for him to buy a gun. This is a case study in NRA tactics. It isn't so much that they buy politicians with lavish contributions (although it's true that the 228 House members who voted with the NRA had received $1.1 million in NRA PAC funds over the past three election cycles). Rather, the gun lobby intimidates them by dishonestly inciting hordes of gullible gun owners. The NRA is a protection racket more than a bribery ring.

The second phase of the campaign was to push through a substitute amendment, purportedly a more effective one. The amendment, obediently introduced by Representative Bill McCollum, orders the attorney general to "develop a system for immediate and accurate identification of felons who attempt to purchase firearms." What kind of system? McCollum, a Republican from Florida, favors some type of computerized fingerprinting system, and the NRA claims the process would be "just like using your VISA card." Here's the scenario: Bob goes to buy a gun. At the gun shop, his fingerprint is taken and electronically transmitted to a computer that then compares it with criminals' prints in a national data base. After a few minutes, the gun dealer has an answer. Bob either goes home or goes hunting.

Unfortunately, McCollum's thinking far outruns existing technology. The best computers can do in assessing fingerprints is narrow the list of possible matches; final identification is still made painstakingly by human eyes. Of course, it *is* technologically possible to check names and addresses instantaneously with a centralized data base, so

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long as you don't mind buying a computer for all of the 275,000 gun shops in America, among other expensive adaptations. But even that, we venture to say, would be difficult to do within 180 days, which is the time limit for implementation imposed by the McCollum amendment.

Nor is 180 days enough time to think through the civil liberties questions raised by the McCollum amendment. Would gun store owners have access to the FBI's criminal files? What other forms of abuse might the data base be subject to? The NRA, which ritually labels the most innocuous forms of gun control as Big Brother incarnate, has signed onto an idea with immense Orwellian potential.

All of this explains why virtually every responsible thinker on the subject opposed the McCollum amendment and why virtually no one expects it to bear fruit. The national Fraternal Order of Police has called it "unrealistic and unworkable," and the International Association of Chiefs of Police labeled it "a total sham." The FBI had a letter ready explaining to Congress exactly how silly the substitute was, but the Reagan administration suppressed it at the last minute, and Attorney General Dick Thornburgh later reprimanded the FBI for having the gall to lobby against the NRA. The irony is worth dwelling on: Ronald Reagan, Mr. Loyalty, turned a deaf ear to appeals from Mrs. James Brady, whose husband's head had absorbed a bullet intended for Reagan.

Equally sad is the number of politicians who lined up with the NRA and should have known better: Lee Hamilton of Indiana, and Tony Coelho, the House whip, for example. Perhaps most disheartening was the performance of Tom Foley. Sure there are lots of hunters out in the Washington state woods, but it's unlikely that they'd unseat the House majority leader because he made them drive to the gun store twice to buy each shotgun. The whole point of amassing political capital is to spend it occasionally, and Foley, as majority leader, could have spent it to good effect. A few months ago we inaugurated a series of profiles of people we like, and Foley was our first "Nice Guy." Now we're back to zero.

NOTEBOOK

□ MEDIUM GHOUL: "He's always been a car buff, so it was a nice way to go." —Mrs. Charles Addams after her husband, the macabre cartoonist, died of a heart attack while sitting in his parked automobile.

□ BUSH LIE OF THE WEEK: Well, it's not a lie exactly, but a pretty spectacular deception. Bush likes to say that taxes per person in Massachusetts, under Michael Dukakis, have increased the second-fastest of any state. It's true that tax revenues per person have increased. That's because personal income in Massachusetts has increased the *fastest* of any state. Massachusetts actually ranks 35th among states in the share of personal income it takes in taxes. Interestingly, this is the mirror image of another favorite Reagan-Bush statistical deception. Defenders of Reaganomics brag that top-bracket taxpayers pay a greater share of total tax revenues than B.R. (Before Reagan). True. That's because they swallow a greater share of total income.

□ THE LIES OF SHEILA TATE: George Bush was the first person to greet the shuttle Discovery astronauts on their return to Earth. This was ostensibly part of his official duties, not a political appearance. Bush's press secretary was asked: Why, in that case, had the vice president missed the previous 25 shuttle landings? Her answer: "Scheduling conflicts."

□ ATTENTION DEBATE QUESTIONERS. Here's one suitable for any of the four national candidates: Is it good or bad for America when the price of oil plummets? OPEC is undergoing one of its periodic episodes of turmoil, and the spot price is $12 and plummeting. Good or bad? Correct answer: it's unquestionably good. America uses more oil than it produces and always will. Cheap oil saves us money. Furthermore, America believes that prices should be set by free-market competition, not by a cartel. If we're worried about undermining conservation and laying ourselves open to a future price hike, the simple answer is a gasoline tax (which also would bring in about a billion dollars per penny). But powerful interests in this country, most notably in Texas, have implicitly bought into the OPEC cartel and want it to succeed. Both parties have a Texan, or would-be Texan, on the ticket and both parties want badly to carry Texas. It would be delicious to see them squirm.

□ TNR'S ENDORSEMENT: No, not for president of the United States—we'll have that in a couple of weeks. (Can you stand the suspense?) But a couple of other countries are electing national leaders soon and, although it may be none of our business, we do have an opinion. In Chile on October 5 we favor Gen. Augusto Pinochet . . . only kidding. In Canada's parliamentary election on November 21, we favor the Conservative Party of Prime Minister Brian Mulroney. The Canadian election is, in effect, a referendum on just one issue: the new free trade treaty with the United States. The Conservatives support the two opposition parties do not. The benefits of free trade are mutual, but not equal—unrestricted access to the huge U.S. market is far more valuable for a small country like Canada than access to Canada is for the United States. Opponents worry that greater economic integration with the United States will lead to slow cultural suicide. But in an increasingly integrated world economy (Europe merges in 1992), the price of cultural isolation is slow economic suicide. The other nation whose coming election is, in effect, a referendum on one vital issue is Israel. That issue is the future of the occupied territories. The conservative Likud, led by Yitzhak Shamir, is committed to retaining "Judea and Samaria" permanently under any circumstance. The Labor Party, led by Simon

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Peres, is prepared—cautiously but sincerely—to negotiate "land for peace." Our oft-expressed view is that some such compromise is essential (almost as oft-expressed as our view that the Arabs make such a compromise almost hopeless). Likud is committed to new Jewish settlements in the territories, revival of the unaffordable Lavi jet fighter, and other disastrous fantasies that four years of uneasy coalition government have forestalled. An unshackled Likud would be a tragedy for Israel. To our Israeli readers (if you get this in time): vote Labor on November 1.

□ KORRECTION KLASSIX: "In May *Literaturnaya Gazeta* ran an advance excerpt of George Orwell's previously taboo *1984*, with an editorial not recognizing the relevance to Stalin's Russia. . . ." —TNR, October 17. Whoops. Make that: ". . . with an editorial *note* recognizing the relevance to Stalin's Russia. . . ." Our apologies to the author, Robert C. Tucker.

□ WHAT NEXT?

Ozone damages condoms, scientists say

—*Boston Globe*, September 9
(thanks to Jeff Jacoby, Boston, Massachusetts)

CAMPAIGN '88

SLOW START

Columbus, Ohio

While lots of good organizational groundwork had been done beforehand, a serious Dukakis for President campaign did not begin in this must-win state until Tuesday, October 4, more than ten weeks after the Democratic National Convention had ended and only five weeks before Election Day. On October 4 Dukakis finally gave what Ohio Democratic pros regard as the right speech in the right place—a speech about economic security at a Jeep plant in Toledo—and Jesse Jackson showed up in Ohio for the first time since Labor Day for a voter-registration rally in Cleveland. Ohio Democratic Party chairman James Ruvulo, who precipitated redirection of Dukakis's campaign here with public complaints about misguided, know-it-all dictation from Boston, says that "there's still plenty of time" to put together a Dukakis victory, but he acknowledges that the Democrats are starting from behind.

Meanwhile, Republican officials are ecstatic almost to the point of arrogance about their lead, pegged by private and public polls at between six and eight points. "We're sitting here, in this crucial battleground state, waiting for the battle," said Republican Party executive director Brian Berry. "We're ready. We are not overconfident. We are open seven days a week. But where are they? We can't believe they are this stupid." The Republicans note that Democrats have just got around to organizing "truth squads" to rebut Bush during his weekly visits to the state, while they have been dogging Dukakis ever since the Democratic convention.

Berry thinks Dukakis's newest national campaign ads—featuring a make-believe Republican strategy committee figuring out how to "package Bush"—are "schlock" and "crummy" (he is not alone), and he says that the Republicans have devoted the time the Democrats have wasted to "piling on the negatives"—prisoner furloughs, alleged flaws in the Massachusetts miracle—so that Dukakis will have to start campaigning against a psychological deficit. Picking up a Dukakis newspaper ad asserting that the Democrat does too revere the Pledge of Allegiance, Berry said, "Look at this. They're always responding to us. We are a Gatling gun."

IT'S IMPOSSIBLE to exaggerate the importance of Ohio to the Democrats' electoral strategy. If Dukakis carries dependable Democratic base states, plus Pennsylvania (where he was two points behind on October 1), Michigan (where he was eight points behind), and Illinois (where he was ahead by seven), he still needs to carry both California (where he is two points ahead) and Ohio in order to win 270 electoral votes, assuming that he loses Texas (where he's trailing by ten). The Republicans, with a stronger Electoral College base, also have targeted Ohio and California as top priority states, in order to keep them out of Dukakis's hands.

Ohio is also a pivotal state in the sense that what plays here, plays elsewhere. Except in 1948 and 1960, Ohio has gone with the winning candidate in every one of the last 25 presidential elections. In the last three elections, the winner's Ohio margin was within a single percentage point of his national outcome. Jimmy Carter carried the state by just 11,000 votes in 1976, but all statewide officeholders are Democrats, including both U.S. senators.

For all these reasons, the Democrats made Ohio a priority state from the outset, and cooperation was good from the beginning between state party regulars and the Dukakis state coordinator, Kathi Rogers, who was a top Mondale staffer in Ohio in 1984. This year, unlike 1984, the Democrats have ample funds to register voters; open coordinated headquarters serving state and national candidates (Senator Howard Metzenbaum is up for re-election, and a furious race is under way over control of the state Senate), run phone banks, and send mailings to voters.

"I told the Democratic Party that I wanted either John Glenn as vice president or $1 million," Ruvulo said. "I didn't get Glenn, but I think I'm going to get the $1 million" in so-called "soft money"—funds that are not subject to federal contribution limits or disclosure requirements and can be used for statewide get-out-the-vote efforts and generic party advertising. Republican sources in Washington say that their "soft money" budget for Ohio is $1.8 million to $2 million. Both sides probably are fibbing about these numbers, probably on the low side. Budgets have become the best-kept secrets of presidential campaigning.

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Despite the efforts of Democratic National Committee chairman Paul Kirk and Dukakis finance chairman Robert Farmer—and despite the impression left by press coverage on the subject—the Republicans will still outspend the Democrats this year nationally and in Ohio. Each side has $44 million from the federal treasury, most of which is used to buy TV ads, and each national party is allowed to raise $8.3 million to give to its presidential candidate. (In 1984 the Democrats could raise only $2 million of this.) In addition, Farmer has vowed to raise $40 million in "soft money," and Bush's finance chairman has promised to match him.

But besides this, the Republican National Committee has an annual operating budget of $40 million, which it uses for everything from polling and issue-development to preparation of audiotapes for local radio stations, and most state Republican parties have budgets far in excess of the Democrats. But at least the Democrats are competitive. In 1984, the Mondale campaign sent only $200,000 to the Ohio party for state organizing, compared with at least $1 million this year.

In Ohio, Dukakis also benefits from one of the most innovative voter-registration programs in the country, much of it devised by Democratic Secretary of State Sherrod Brown. Ohioans can register by mail, and coupons are available in newspapers, at government offices, in schools, and at some grocery stores. Application forms also are mailed out with utility bills. McDonald's printed applications on its tray liners. Besides this, the Democratic Party has mounted special registration drives in black and other strongly Democratic areas, and is offering a bounty of 50 cents per registrant signed up.

WHILE ALL the right things were happening organizationally to provide a Democratic victory, party regulars found Dukakis and his top advisers serving up the wrong messages for Ohio voters, campaigning in the wrong places and not listening to the advice they were trying to transmit to Boston. Dukakis was talking drugs and defense, and doing it at the federal courthouse in downtown Cleveland and in the Republican suburbs of Cincinnati (where he was booed), whereas the Ohio professionals thought he should talk jobs and go to blue-collar, Reagan-Democrat areas of northern Ohio.

"This campaign is not based on knocking on doors," said former Jackson campaign manager Jerry Austin, "but on free media and paid media. And on both counts, we are getting creamed by the Bush people." Ruvulo rejected outright one Democratic Party ad much beloved by Dukakis advisers in Boston that featured a fat man laughing about the federal budget deficit. According to Ruvulo, "Ohio's unemployment rate is the same as the national average, but the economic insecurity level is much higher. In Youngstown, Parma, and other areas of the Northeast, people still remember being laid off. That's the issue they care about, and that's the issue that Democrats get elected on in this state."

On September 19 Ruvulo went public with his complaints, charging that he was having only "one-way conversations" with Boston. At the end of the month, Boston sent out Paul Bograd, former Dukakis primary campaign manager in New York, to work on "the message" and on scheduling. Bograd makes no bones about the fact that the new Dukakis message of "economic populism" was the result of complaints from the pros. Besides Dukakis's Toledo appearance—at a plant whose product is a successful U.S. export—the fruits of renewal of the Dukakis campaign will include new, Midwest-specific TV ads and, if the pros get their way, more appearances per trip by Dukakis in blue-collar areas of the state.

The other key part of the Democratic equation is the black vote. "There's been a lot of waiting since the convention to see what Jesse wants people to do," said former Jackson campaign official Danni Palmore (now deputy director of the Ohio Democratic Party's get-out-the-vote campaign). At the Congressional Black Caucus dinner in Washington on September 17, she said, Jackson "made it unmistakably clear that he thinks we've got to have Michael Dukakis and Lloyd Bentsen in the White House. He'd always said 'let's register and vote,' but not 'we've got to have Mike Dukakis.' You could tell he meant it, and there was real relief in the crowd. Then Jesse and Dukakis embraced. Unfortunately, the media did not pay attention." According to Palmore, Dukakis so far has not campaigned much in black neighborhoods or had blacks traveling with him, which also has dampened enthusiasm.

Jackson's October 4 appearance at a church in Cleveland was designed to enliven black support, although Democratic officials had hoped Jackson would make several appearances at universities around the state, which he didn't do. The Republicans are as pleased about Jackson's lack of performance as they are about that of the Dukakis campaign, and they are also buoyed by poll results that show Bush attracting 16 percent of the black vote, compared with five percent for Ronald Reagan in 1984. "If Jackson had been here a month ago and lighted a fuse, I'd be worried," said Berry. "The deadline for voter registration is October 11, and if Jackson is just starting now, he is not going to light the fuse."

MORTON M. KONDRACKE

CAMPAIGN '88

BLACK AND RIGHT

AT A White House lunch in mid-September, President Reagan asked Frank Donatelli, his chief political adviser, for a rundown of Republican prospects in Senate races this year. As Donatelli began to talk, Reagan interrupted. "I'd like to do something for that Alan Keyes," the president said. Donatelli cautioned him about constraints

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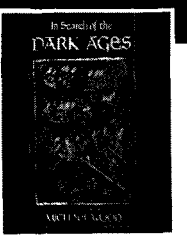

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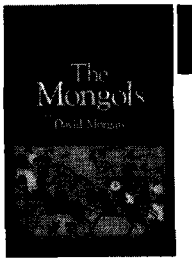

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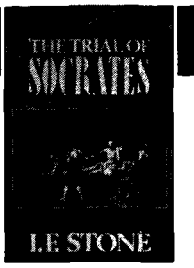

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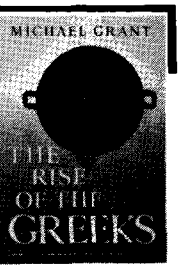

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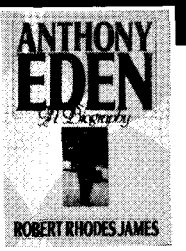

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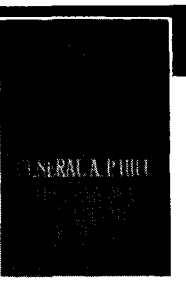

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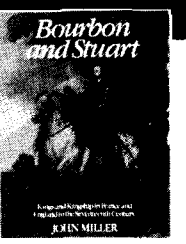

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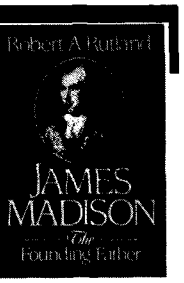

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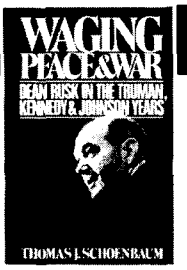

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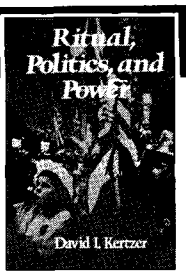

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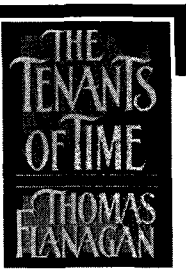

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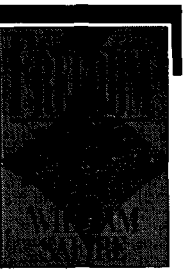

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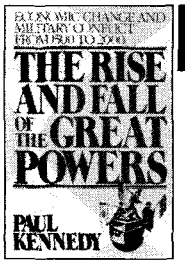

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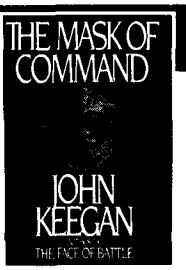

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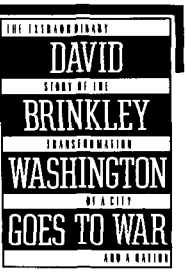

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on his time. He noted that many Senate races are close and might benefit from a Reagan appearance. But Reagan was adamant. When Donatelli finished, he again brought up Keyes. "I want to do this," Reagan said. "Let's put this on the schedule soon."

KEYES IS probably the most interesting—faint praise, for sure—and certainly the best educated Republican Senate candidate this year. He is black, 38, with a Harvard doctorate in government (his thesis was on Alexander Hamilton). He is a conservative who served six years in the Reagan administration, quitting in 1987 as assistant secretary of state for international organizations. He is an impressive speaker. Now, he is challenging Democratic Senator Paul Sarbanes of Maryland, a well-entrenched and popular liberal. Keyes has only a remote chance of winning. A late September poll in the *Baltimore Sun* gave Sarbanes a lead of 62 percent to 25 percent.

A Reagan visit might narrow the gap. But Keyes still faces two large problems that make it difficult for black Republicans (and some white Republicans) to run competitive races. One is money. By September 30 Keyes had raised roughly $300,000, Sarbanes about $1.2 million. Keyes, a political unknown until he got the Republican nomination in June, lacks the money to build substantial name identification. Like most blacks, he doesn't come from the business community, which funds many Republican campaigns. He's an intellectual. He's gotten little from corporate PACs.

Senator Bob Dole has tried to help. He was the draw at a Keyes fund-raiser on October 2 and was so impressed that he doubled the contribution of his PAC from $2,500 to $5,000 and called PAC directors on Keyes's behalf from his car phone on the way home. Still, money isn't pouring in. The National Republican Senatorial Committee has given Keyes about half the $314,000 that's permitted, but it won't promise to give any more.

The second problem is that Keyes has been thrown into a seemingly unwinnable campaign. He probably couldn't have won the GOP primary in the first place. The winner was Tom Blair, a businessman who soured on his chances and dropped out. Republicans turned to Jeane Kirkpatrick, the former ambassador to the United Nations, and she said no, but recommended Keyes. The Republican central committee went along. But the party, almost as weak as the pathetic Massachusetts GOP, had no resources to give Keyes, no party infrastructure that could become a campaign organization. The party hasn't won a statewide race since 1980. "There's no there there," says William Kristol, Keyes's campaign manager, of the Maryland GOP. Its donor list is tiny, so Keyes had to mail to contributors to Jack Kemp's presidential campaign and to the list of Linda Chavez, the 1986 Republican Senate candidate in Maryland.

Keyes has a simple formula for winning. It's easy to explain but difficult to do. He starts with the base Republican vote of just under 40 percent. Chavez got 39 percent against Barbara Mikulski, and Larry Hogan 37 percent against Sarbanes in 1982. He's likely to get most of this vote. Then there are blacks, 24 percent of the electorate. Keyes needs at least half of their vote to win. This is the hard part. Keyes has met privately with many of the leading black politicians in the state, but none has endorsed him. They aren't criticizing him either, which Keyes takes as a good sign. Keyes argues that black Democrats would be helped if he wins. The Democratic Party has never nominated a black for statewide office. "They'd have to put up a black candidate in 1994," says Keyes. "If I win, [Baltimore mayor] Kurt Schmoke guarantees himself the Democratic nomination in 1994."

Maybe, but blacks aren't persuaded yet. A statewide poll in late September found that less than ten percent of blacks plan to vote for Keyes. He's hoping his media campaign, which won't be lavish unless he raises $1 million or so, will change that. His TV ads are head shots, Keyes talking. They end with an announcer saying, "This time, Maryland, vote your pride. Alan Keyes for United States Senate." I think I know which kind of pride he's getting at. But he insists his is not a racial campaign. He cleverly milked good publicity out of his rejection of a GOP convention speech drafted for him by Republican officials. It began, "I am a Republican who happens to be black." He wouldn't agree to speak at the convention until George Bush called with a personal request.

KEYES TAKES the normal conservative positions on taxes, gun control, domestic spending, etc. But there are some twists. The word he uses most in speeches is "empowerment." He uses it when talking about poor urban neighborhoods, which in Maryland means black. He wants to create neighborhood councils, or "urban townships." They would be able to tax local merchants, and state and federal social programs would be run through them. "It's a return to the Tocquevillean description," he says. "The localities send their agents to the federal government rather than the federal government implementing its power through the local agents." His emphasis on local political power got Keyes in trouble on a black radio show in Washington. The interviewer, Kathy Hughes, asked about statehood for the District of Columbia. Keyes waffled, and she criticized him sharply over the air.

The Keyes campaign has a neoconservative flair. After he left the State Department, Keyes joined the American Enterprise Institute, a neocon enclave in Washington. Kristol, the campaign manager, was chief of staff to Education Secretary William Bennett and is Irving Kristol's son. The press secretary, Rachel Flick, is a former assistant editor of the *Public Interest*, assistant to Edwin Meese, and White House correspondent for the *New York Post*. The issues director is Zelda Novak, daughter of columnist Robert Novak.

Sarbanes has yet to break a sweat. Kristol concedes that Sarbanes is smart to ignore the Keyes campaign. He has agreed to at least one TV debate, but he hasn't engaged Keyes on any issues. In fact, some Democrats speak kindly of Keyes for running a high-toned campaign. Sarbanes won't put any spots on television until mid-October. He spends his time speaking to small Democratic groups.

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"When you have the registration advantage, the turnout advantage, and the elected official advantage, it behooves you to pay attention to that base of support," says Bruce Frame, Sarbanes's press secretary and political adviser. "That's what you do." Sarbanes is also the master of the small issue or grant. He filibustered against the sale of Washington National Airport, and showed up on October 3 when this autumn's first applications for low-income energy assistance were made in Baltimore.

Keyes agrees with Jesse Jackson on practically nothing, but in a way they are allies. If the empowerment issue catches on, it will be partly because Jackson popularized it. Keyes says he agrees with Jackson's talk about "people taking responsibility for themselves." But Jackson wants to "empower bureaucracy," he says. "I think we can only empower people by empowering them. I'm talking about the redistribution of political power back to the base." And if Reagan wants to come to Maryland and help him make that point, Keyes is willing.

FRED BARNES

Precedent and the Rehnquist Court.

REVERSE DISCRIMINATION

WHEN SHOULD the Supreme Court overturn one of its own prior decisions? As the balance of power on the Court shifts in a conservative direction, that question is beginning to press hard—both for those who disagree with many Warren and Burger Court decisions and those who think the decisions were correct. It is the central issue in what is probably the most important Supreme Court case of the new term, *Patterson* v. *McLean Credit Union*.

When *Patterson* was first argued before the Court last February, the issue raised was a narrow question about the scope of a landmark 1976 civil rights case called *Runyon* v. *McCrary*. But the Court, on its own initiative and by a 5-4 vote, then ordered the parties to reargue the case, this time addressing the question of whether *Runyon* should be overruled. That action raises the prospect that a majority of the Court may now be prepared to start reversing a range of prior decisions that have long been targets of judicial conservatives.

What lawyers call the doctrine of "stare decisis"—"to stand by things decided"—counsels a court to follow prior decisions without reassessing their correctness. The test of one's commitment to stare decisis is a willingness to put up with cases one dislikes, just as the test of one's commitment to free speech is a willingness to put up with speech one dislikes.

But stare decisis isn't an absolute; the law constantly evolves, and precedents *are* overturned. The Supreme Court, for example, was surely right to overrule *Plessy* v. *Ferguson*'s "separate but equal" doctrine in *Brown* v. *Board of Education*. But the reason cannot simply be that the Court thought that *Plessy* was wrong. If that were enough, then the emergence of a new majority would be sufficient justification to overturn *Runyon* and a range of other controversial cases, such as *Roe* v. *Wade* and *Miranda* v. *Arizona*. But the doctrine of stare decisis says: most of the time a court should adhere to decided cases, whether or not it thinks they were correctly decided.

WHY SHOULD that be? One answer is that faithfulness to precedent—and the ruled consistency that it promises—is part of our very concept of what law is. And there are also a variety of functional explanations.

First, there is a concern for efficiency. As Justice Benjamin Cardozo once wrote, the "labor of judges" (and lawyers, too, he might have added) "would be increased almost to the breaking point if every past decision could be reopened in every case." Second, stare decisis promotes predictability in human affairs—it allows people to organize their actions against a predictable backdrop of legal rules, and protects actual reliance on those rules. "In most matters," Justice Louis Brandeis said, "it is more important that the applicable rule of law be settled than that it be settled rightly." Third, stare decisis rests on a sense that judges should have humility—that prior legal interpretations are rarely wrong in the way that $2 + 2 = 5$ is wrong, that interpretation leaves room for judgment, and that on a close question the considered judgment of one's predecessors should count for a great deal. Fourth, stare decisis promotes respect for law, including what Justice John Marshall Harlan called "public faith in the judiciary as a source of impersonal and reasoned judgments." A court's fidelity to prior decisions reinforces the sense that law binds judges along with the rest of us, and that judicial decisions are not simply the constantly varying assessments of constantly varying judicial personalities.

But competing concerns will at times counsel overruling a precedent. For example, a mistake may be causing harm and generating new legal mistakes; society's needs may change; respect for law may diminish if courts blindly adhere to a course that the public considers unjust; and the very interest in promoting law's predictability may, almost paradoxically, require changing a legal rule, since rules that get way out of line with current practices inevitably strike haphazardly. Thus, it is silly to say that our courts may never overrule their own decisions (although until quite recently that was the position of the British House of Lords), and equally silly to permit precedents always to be up for grabs.

No simple formula can dictate when cases should be overruled. American courts have generally said there must be "strong reasons" to overrule a prior decision, and they tend to evaluate a variety of factors to determine whether the reasons are strong enough. Is the prior decision "clearly" wrong? Was it casually or carefully considered? Is the decision aberrational, or does it fit into the rest of the legal landscape? Is the decision causing harm? How much reli-

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ance on the decision has there been? Is judicial overruling the only practical recourse?

IN SPITE OF the seeming amorphousness of this approach, the case for overruling *Runyon* turns out to be very weak. The first question the Supreme Court will consider in *Patterson*, obviously, is whether *Runyon* was wrongly decided. The case involves an 1866 congressional act requiring that "all persons . . . shall have the same right in every State and Territory to make and enforce contracts . . . as is enjoyed by white citizens." *Runyon* held that this provision prohibits private discrimination in the making of contracts. That conclusion, at the least, was not "clearly" wrong. As honest assessments should concede, the statute is not very clear. The critical word "right" is ambiguous. It might simply mean that state laws may not limit the capacity of blacks to make contracts, but it plausibly also guarantees blacks a right to make contracts free of discrimination by private parties. The legislative history is also ambiguous. Reports to Congress made clear that in 1866 the primary obstacle facing the freedmen in making contracts was pervasive and ruthless discrimination by private citizens, not state laws. But specific statements by politicians involved with the legislation do point both ways. Other factors that might bear on the statute's meaning do not establish that the *Runyon* Court was clearly mistaken in choosing the broader interpretation of equality rights.

But even assuming that a majority on the current Supreme Court concludes that *Runyon* was wrongly decided in 1976, the case for overruling it remains poor. For starters, it's very difficult to claim that *Runyon* is causing harm. Obviously there are those who would prefer that private parties be free to discriminate, and American law has frequently sheltered private parties from duties imposed on public officials. But far from being aberrational, *Runyon*'s condemnation of private racial discrimination is a broadly accepted norm today, echoed in numerous other laws—and it's hardly a distinctively difficult or confusing norm to apply. While there do remain deeply controversial legal issues involving race, such as affirmative action, the prohibition of intentional racial discrimination is at the core of our contemporary consensus about what racial equality means. The current reconsideration of *Runyon* was instigated by the Court itself, not by the clamor of a public enduring unjust burdens.

In fact, one obvious reason not to overrule *Runyon* is that doing so would have a uniquely harmful effect. *Runyon* has helped strengthen a national consensus against racial discrimination, which has engendered a broader measure of hope among black Americans that they can at last assume a place as equals in our national community. Whether or not the current Court majority believes that *Runyon* was legally correct, it has had practical and symbolic consequences, and reversing it would hurt the country by casting doubt on a widely accepted view of basic justice. The point is not simply that *Runyon* has become "part of the fabric of our law" or that reversing it would "defeat expectations"—both were true of *Plessy* v. *Ferguson*. Much more specifically, reversing *Runyon* would betray the hope that American law, step-by-step over the past 35 years, has given to the black race that it once helped to enslave and dominate. Such considerations of practical wisdom unquestionably have a role to play in deciding whether to overrule a precedent.

But the clincher in the argument is that *Runyon* construed a congressional statute, not the Constitution. While a mistaken constitutional decision can only be overturned by the Court or a constitutional amendment, Congress itself can overturn a statutory interpretation if it thinks the Court was wrong. Of course, it's harder for Congress to reverse a court decision that says a statute means "x" than it is to block "x" as an initial legislative proposal; and, on the other hand, Congress can typically "correct" a decision denying the existence of a constitutional right if it chooses to create an equivalent statutory right. Nevertheless, the Court is quite reasonably more deferential to statutory than to constitutional precedents.

With *Runyon*, the case for adherence to precedent is exceptionally strong because Congress has done more than silently acquiesce in the Court's interpretation of the 1866 Civil Rights Act. First, Congress has rejected specific efforts to repeal the application of the 1866 act to private racial discrimination. One of the most intuitively plausible criticisms of *Runyon* is that if the 1866 Civil Rights Act actually covers private discrimination, then it made little sense for Congress to go through the bitter debates surrounding the adoption of the modern civil rights acts in 1964 and 1968, which in fact have narrower coverage in some respects. (The 1964 Civil Rights Act, for example, exempts private employers with fewer than 15 employees.) But surely a powerful answer to this argument as a reason for overruling *Runyon* is that Congress itself considered and rebuffed efforts to restrict the 1866 act, although aware of court decisions giving it broad coverage.

Even more significantly, Congress has built on the Court's broad interpretation of the 1866 Civil Rights Act, in a way that can only be viewed as an affirmative *endorsement*. In 1976, after *Runyon*, Congress passed the Civil Rights Attorney's Fees Awards Act. Its purpose was to encourage lawsuits under certain civil rights acts, including the 1866 act, by permitting successful plaintiffs to recover their attorney's fees. Both the House and Senate reports on this bill make as explicit as can be that Congress was trying to encourage the enforcement of rights under the 1866 act as it had been construed by the courts.

CONGRESS HAS TO legislate against the background of court decisions. It must be able to rely upon the courts' interpretations of its statutes. When Congress agrees with judicial rulings such as *Runyon*, it can maintain existing civil rights statutes without amending them, and it can write statutes such as the 1976 Attorney's Fees Act in a shorthand way that builds on what the courts have said. Even if the Court now determines that its earlier interpretation was wrong, to overrule a precedent on which Congress has so clearly relied creates havoc in the development of our law. And surely this helps to explain why 145 members of

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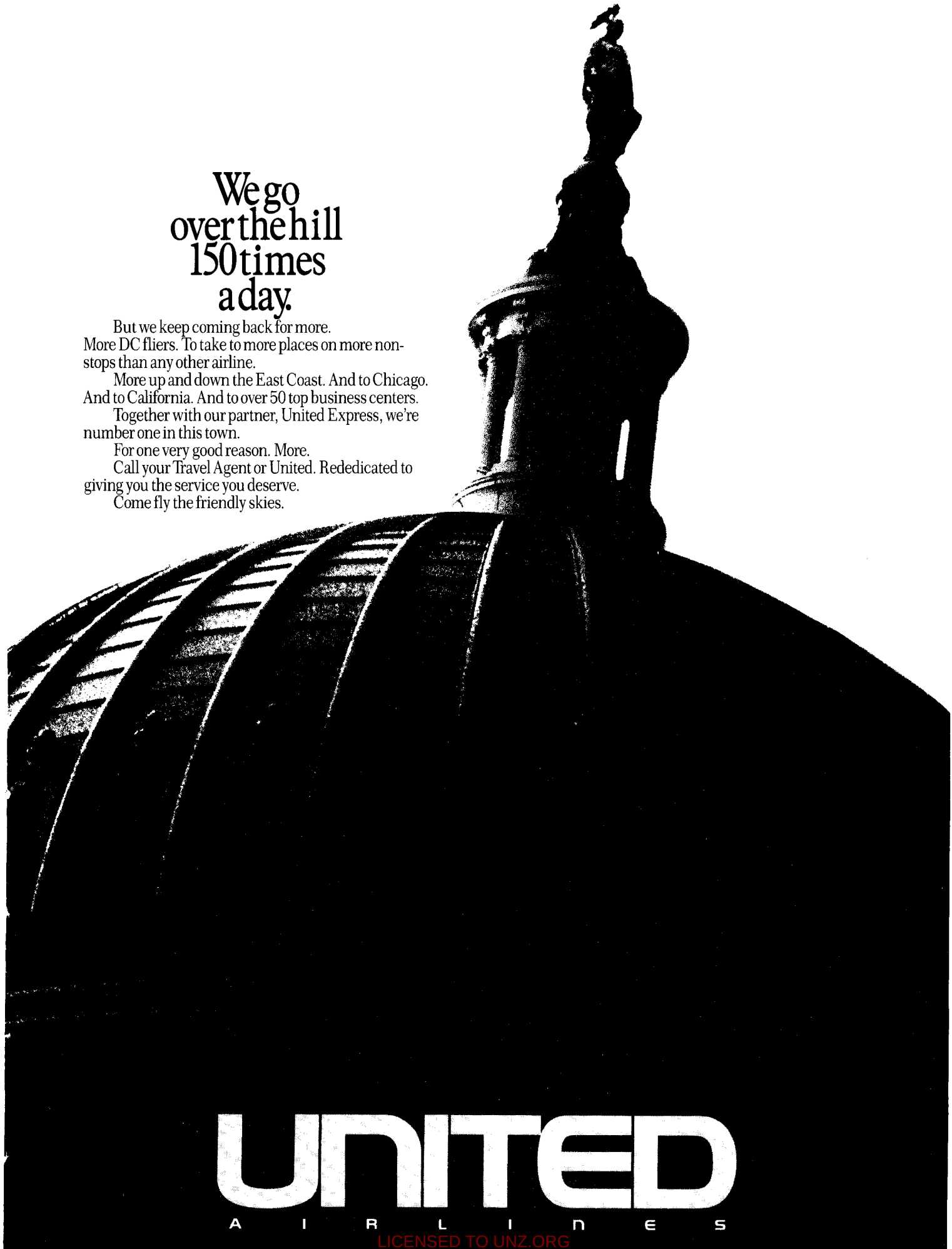
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the House and 66 members of the Senate have filed a brief urging the Supreme Court not to overrule *Runyon*.

But Congress's "reliance" raises a deeper and even more interesting issue, an issue somewhat different from the question of adhering to decisions that might be wrong. Even if the Court's interpretation of this statute was wrong in 1976, might that interpretation be *right* today? Might the statute have "meant" one thing when *Runyon* was decided and another thing now, even though the words have remained unchanged?

The answer, I think, is yes. The conventional way of reading a statute is to see it in isolation, and to interpret it in light of the specific intent of those who adopted it initially. But a statute actually functions like an organism dropped into a broader sea of law, and it takes on coloration from its ever-changing environment. Its meaning can be modified indirectly by later congressional enactments, and perhaps by other changes in the legal environment as well. The very meaning of the 1866 act may have changed when Congress enacted the 1976 Attorney's Fees Act and thereby endorsed a particular understanding of the earlier law.

For all these reasons, there's a good chance the Court ultimately will decide not to overrule *Runyon*. If this prediction is wrong, we will certainly have good evidence that the Court is also ready to overrule other major Warren and Burger precedents that it thinks were wrongly decided. If the Court does adhere to *Runyon*, though, that probably won't tell us very much about the future. The most prominent cases that the Court might reconsider next are constitutional ones, and the factors that bear on overruling may look different in each particular situation. The first line of defense of those cases will be the argument that they were correctly decided. But if a majority of the Court disagrees, everything will turn on the flexible doctrine of stare decisis. To be applied honestly, the doctrine requires judges of every stripe to live with cases that they think are wrong. And to be applied wisely, it requires that judges understand the many ways in which their own decisions and national values have always shaped and defined each other.

PAUL GEWIRTZ

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CAMPAIGN '88

WHITE AND WRONG

Jackson, Mississippi

A state with high unemployment, below average per capita income, and an unmatched appetite for federal subsidies and transfer funds ought to be fertile ground for Democrats, but in Mississippi Michael Dukakis is running over 20 points behind George Bush, and Representative W[illiam] Dowdy, a three-term Democratic congressmen from [Pasca]son, has fallen way behind conservative Represen[tative] Trent Lott in the race to fill the Senate seat being va[cated] by Democrat John Stennis.

A CULTURE SHAPED by racial segregation and [eco]nomic backwardness has made it virtually impo[ssi]ble for Northern Democrats to win Mississippi's elec[tions]. Whatever appeal the "Massachusetts miracle" might h[ave], Dukakis fails all of white Mississippians' cultural tests. He is not a WASP. He appeared on the same stage with the Re[v.] Jesse Jackson. And he is associated with people (e.g., Easterners, the ACLU, liberals) who, they believe, want to remove the American flag from Pascagoula's main street and install crack parlors and porno shops.

Many Mississippi whites have bought the theory that Dukakis has made a "secret deal" with Jackson at the convention that would give Jackson untold power in a Dukakis administration. One Grenada County Democrat, who is reluctantly backing Dowdy, but not Dukakis, complained that the national party was run by a "Yankee governor with a funny name and a nigger preacher." As if this were not bad enough, Mississippi blacks, resentful that Jackson is not the candidate, are unenthusiastic about Dukakis.

Dukakis's Mississippi backers knew he was in trouble even before the Republican convention. When Dukakis was running 17 points ahead of Bush nationally, he was 10 to 12 percent behind Bush in Mississippi. In 1980, when Ronald Reagan visited the Neshoba County Fair and declared his support for "state's rights," he drew over 15,000 wildly enthusiastic white Mississippians. When Dukakis came on August 4, he attracted a few thousand curious onlookers. With the latest state poll showing Bush ahead 54 percent to 31 percent, the Dukakis campaign has written Mississippi off. Its campaign headquarters, housed on the first floor of a peach-colored house in Jackson, boasts a single typewriter and an old PC.

Dowdy is being hurt by the national ticket. In his public appearances he rarely mentions Dukakis by name, and when challenged says that he will vote for the nominee, but is running an "independent campaign." Even in an off year, however, Dowdy would have had difficulty beating Lott.

Elected in 1981 in a special election caused by Representative John Hinson's resignation, Dowdy is a moderate Democrat who backed the extension of the Voting Rights Act and opposed Reagan tax and budget cuts, but who has supported the *contras* and gone along with election year excrescences like the death penalty for drug pushers. A gangly man with large ears, Dowdy looks like a young Lyndon Johnson, but he lacks Johnson's indomitable energy and brutal will to power. His record in Congress has been undistinguished. But in House races and in the Senate primary, his support for civil rights has ensured the black vote, while his pronounced drawl and unpretentious "good ole boy" style has won over small-town Democrats.

Dowdy's opponent, Trent Lott, is in many ways his opposite. While Dowdy comes from a wealthy family,

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Lott's father drove a school bus and his mother was a schoolteacher. A cheerleader at the University of Mississippi, Lott has the go-go optimism and economic individualism of the self-made small-business man. In the House of Representatives, Lott championed the Reagan agenda of supply-side tax cuts and business deregulation. With his blow-dry hair and rimless glasses, Lott's base is in the urban professionals and small-business men who have prospered from the influx of defense money into Jackson and the Gulf. Lott is at his best telling the Jaycees that raising the minimum wage will "cause inflation and loss of jobs." But Lott, an opponent of voting rights extension, the Grove City civil rights bill, and a federal holiday for Martin Luther King, also appeals to racist Democrats.

WITH BLACKS making up 35 percent to 40 percent of Mississippi's electorate, Dowdy can defeat Lott even if he only gets a third of the white vote. But so far Dowdy has not made the most of his opportunities. Democratic professionals describe his campaign as disorganized. Dowdy isn't polling, he told one congressman, because he "doesn't want to know the numbers." Lott will have raised three times as much money and has been running television ads heavily since June. Dowdy's message is short on specific proposals, as well as vision and passion.

Dowdy is most effective among rural Democrats. At the Neshoba County Fair, Dowdy criticized Lott for using a chauffeur in Washington at taxpayers' expense—a result of congressional legislation to provide House leaders with chauffeur-bodyguards against the terrorist threat. The chauffeur, George Awkward, makes about $50,000 a year driving the minority whip around. "Before we cut services to our senior citizens, let's cut George," Dowdy declared. For a month afterward, "Let's cut George" became the Dowdy slogan. But Dowdy has had trouble reaching urban professionals and college students. Speaking at predominately white Delta State, Dowdy tried to convince the students to support him because as a Democrat he would have more clout in Congress than Lott. This argument is not without merit among Delta farmers or Gulfport defense workers, but it fails to inspire student audiences.

In his ads, Lott has tried to paint himself as the friend of the young, the old, and even the poor. "Trent Lott stands in the way of anyone who would break our promise to older Americans," one ad about Social Security proclaims. Lott has also recruited a black preacher—a staple of Republican campaigns—to sing his praises and to pick off some of Dowdy's black support. But most of all, Lott is also trying to convince Mississippi's voters that he would carry out Mississippi's peculiar brand of state socialism. If he is elected, Lott proclaims in his ads, "We're going to get our share of the dollars going to Chicago and New York."

Dowdy's lackluster campaign has frustrated and angered Democrats who see the Senate race as far more important than the presidential contest. "I hate to say this, but I resent what Dowdy is doing," one prominent Jackson Democrat said. "If he loses in November, it won't just be for six years. Lott is capable of holding on to that seat for 40 years."

But there are two Democrats who are coming to terms with Mississippi's political culture: Mike Espy, the 34-year-old black congressman from the Delta, and Ray Mabus, the state's 40-year-old governor. In a 53 percent black district that is one of three poorest in the country, Espy won his seat in 1986 against two-term Republican Webb Franklin by capturing all of the black vote and ten percent of the white vote. Espy, a slight man with wire-rimmed glasses and a small mustache, looks like a New York intellectual of the 1930s rather than a Southern politician. The son of the owner of a chain of black funeral parlors, Espy was educated at Howard and at the University of Santa Clara Law School. Espy returned to Mississippi in 1979 to head a legal services office. In 1980 he joined the state government, first as assistant secretary of state and then as assistant attorney general.

As a congressman, Espy has assiduously tried to represent affluent white soybean farmers as well as the unemployed blacks living in tar-paper shacks. Appointed to both the House Budget and Agricultural committees, Espy has been one of the most active freshmen on Capitol Hill. He got the Pentagon to increase by 65 percent its purchase of Mississippi catfish, most of which is raised in his district, and got Congress to declare National Catfish Day on June 25. He also spearheaded a bill to create a Delta Commission to study the area's severe economic problems. This year, as he runs for re-election, he is being backed by those conservative white farmers like Richard Flowers who will also be voting for Bush and Lott. He carefully stayed out of the Democratic presidential race between Jackson and Dukakis. Democratic officials expect him to get as high as 20 percent of the white vote—a virtual miracle in this district.

But on September 20 Espy returned to his house in Madison to find "nigger" carved onto two doors and paint splattered on his entranceway. Espy's Republican opponent, former Reagan Commerce Department official Jack Coleman, insinuated that Espy himself had carved the words to create sympathy. "The more I get around the district and talk to people, more than half of the folks I talked to believe he may have had something to do with it," Coleman said.

LIKE ESPY, Mabus seems miscast as a successful Mississippi Democrat. The son of a prosperous timber farmer, Mabus got his law degree from Harvard and practiced in Sargent Shriver's Washington law firm until Governor William Winter called him back to the state in 1979 to help draft Winter's educational reform legislation. In 1982 Mabus successfully ran for state auditor and turned what had been a largely ceremonial post into the command post of an anti-corruption campaign. With Mabus's help, the FBI has already indicted 60 local officials. By doing this, however, Mabus was attacking what had been the base of Democratic power in Mississippi.

When Mabus ran for governor in 1987, he ran on a platform of ending local corruption, bringing efficiency to state government, and improving the state's dismal education system. Taking a leaf from Governor Bill Clinton in neighboring Arkansas, Mabus argued that Mississippi

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could no longer base its economic future on attracting light unskilled industry from the North—in the '80s some of these firms that had migrated to Mississippi in the '70s had already left for Mexico in search of still lower wages. To attract high-technology industries, Mississippi had to raise its educational level dramatically.

Mabus won largely because of the black vote. But his 30 percent of the white vote was drawn partly from members of Mississippi's urban middle class who previously had backed Republicans like Lott and Thad Cochran. It is a vote, Mabus says, that is "less party oriented, less ideologically oriented, more attuned to the economy."

As governor, Mabus has tried to maintain his coalition. He got the legislature to pass a $200 million education bill that includes $100 million to raise teachers' salaries. When the legislature balked at his plan for reorganizing Mississippi's chaotic local government, replacing the state's 410 "beats" with county jurisdictions, Mabus pressured it to put the measure on the November ballot and is waging a campaign over the heads of local officials. The most recent poll showed 67 percent of voters in favor of Mabus's plan and only 17 percent against.

Mabus's strategy, like Espy's, is to frame issues in a way that appeals directly to his white constituents. He has publicly stayed out of the bitter racial conflicts that have affected counties such as Amite and Grenada, where most white students have fled to segregated academies and where white school boards control predominately black schools. But in a state still torn by racial conflict—in August the black fraternity at the University of Mississippi was burned to the ground—Mabus and Espy have little choice. If they framed their issues in terms of uplifting the state's blacks, they would be quickly returned to private life and replaced by politicians like Coleman and Lott.

Mabus, however, committed one very serious political error when he tried unsuccessfully to replace the black state party chairman, who had backed his opponent in the primary, with a largely unknown white woman. The scars of this battle are still apparent in the highly critical comments of black officials.

ESPY AND MABUS represent the hope for Democrats in Mississippi. They understand that Democrats can no longer rely on old loyalties and empty populism to win votes. Both men are carving out essentially new coalitions in Mississippi politics. Both men realize that race has been a central factor in Mississippi politics, but they believe that they can redirect Mississippi voters' attention to the deeper question of economic underdevelopment. Their strategy is peculiar to Mississippi, but is certainly relevant to Chicago, Philadelphia, and New York—not to mention the national Democratic Party.

JOHN B. JUDIS

John B. Judis is senior editor of *In These Times* and author of *William F. Buckley, Jr.: Patron Saint of the Conservatives* (Simon and Schuster).

The next fiscal crisis.

DUNKIRK II

IN NOVEMBER 1980, as a member of Ronald Reagan's transition team, David Stockman drafted his famous 35-page memo, "Avoiding an Economic Dunkirk." Stockman warned that the Federal Reserve's tight money policy might well drag the economy into recession, widen the federal deficit (a then-hideous $38 billion), and undercut the possibility of any tax cut, leaving the new supply-side doctrine stillborn.

As it happened, the supply-side crew then in command overruled Stockman, damned the torpedoes, and proceeded full speed ahead with a huge tax cut and a military buildup. Immense deficits indeed resulted. Inflation did not subside. The Fed kept the screws on, and a deep recession ensued. But, as in the original Dunkirk operation of 1940, Reagan's heroes accomplished an orderly evacuation, took their lumps early, and went on to turn an economic disaster into the longest peacetime recovery in U.S. history.

Or perhaps they only left the final wreckage to the next commander in chief. Thanks to Reagan's fiscal legacy, the next administration could face a Dunkirk of far more serious proportions. Here's why: Until now, the economy has managed—anomalously—to combine high deficits, low inflation, and steady economic growth. The Federal Reserve has run a money policy just loose enough to keep the recovery going and just tight enough to reassure foreign suppliers of capital and the domestic bond market that a new bout of inflation is not around the corner. For five years this balancing act worked. Growth perked along and inflation remained low.

But now inflationary pressures are creeping back. By the second quarter of 1988, inflation was running at a brisk five percent, up from 2.7 percent in 1987. The rising inflation reflects tight plant capacity, low unemployment, and most important, the cheap dollar. In response, the Federal Reserve has done what it generally does in such circumstances. It put the brakes on money growth, beginning last April. The discount rate was hiked a point-and-a-quarter. The prime rate has been nudged upward, from 8¼ to ten percent. Short-term interest rates rose by more than a point between April and August as well. Higher interest costs, in turn, not only serve to dampen economic growth; they become an independent source of higher inflation. The result is a move, slight so far, back toward a 1970s-style stagflation with slower growth and higher prices. Another jump in the rate of inflation would presumably prompt the Fed to clamp down even tighter, and thereby intensify the inflationary cycle.

If this dynamic catches hold, it will prove calamitous for the next administration, whether Republican or Democratic. Sluggish economic growth means lower tax receipts, while higher interest rates make it more costly to finance

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the public debt. At the 2.3 percent growth rate that the Congressional Budget Office currently projects for next year, the FY 1989 deficit will be $152 billion. But if the growth rate falls off by just one percentage point, the deficit will rise, by about $15 billion in 1989, and about $30 billion in 1990. With a recession and a zero growth rate next year, the deficit would approach $200 billion. Once the economy slips into recession, the wider deficit will preclude the administration from using fiscal policy to get out of recession. Meanwhile, as inflationary pressures rise, the Fed will have no appetite for using loose money to bail out the economy and the administration. Thus, even one more minor jolt in price pressure could set off a chain reaction that leaves the next administration grappling with stagflation throughout its term, with no running room to cut taxes, or raise them, or do much of anything else. It would spend its entire term on damage control. No wonder Bill Bradley, the Senate's shrewdest economic thinker, decided to pass up running for president in 1988.

HOW TO GET out of this box? An updated memorandum on Avoiding Dunkirk can identify one brief window of opportunity: a fiscal deal with the Federal Reserve very early in the new administration, preferably during the transition. The deal is very straightforward. The administration offers to guarantee a big reduction in the deficit, by a certain date in mid-1989. In return, the Fed agrees to take its foot off the money hose. The bond market, reassured, ceases bidding up the price at which it is willing to finance government borrowing; interest rates subside across the board; and the recovery clicks into a new, more sustainable gear for 1989 and beyond. The timing allows the new administration to begin with a nice spur to the economy in the form of looser money and lower interest rates. The slightly depressive effect of a lower deficit bites a few months later, when it will serve to ease new inflationary pressures without strangling the recovery. With U.S. fiscal and monetary policy in better balance, trading partners are reassured, the dollar firms up, and the mild pressure from higher priced imports stays manageable.

The best scenario would be for the president-elect to initiate a closed-door meeting in November with Fed Chairman Alan Greenspan, to offer just that deal. Assuming Greenspan goes along (he surely would—he wants a smaller deficit as much as anyone), the president-elect then suggests that the two men immediately face the cameras, together, to announce their plan. At that, financial markets would rally, and Congress would be under immense moral and political pressure to deliver on the deal.

How precisely to cut the deficit? That, of course, will take presidential leadership and political bargaining. But a cut of a sufficient magnitude to produce a deal with the Fed, say $50 billion to $60 billion, could be done with one part spending cuts, one part tax enforcement, and a fairly painless tax increase in the range of $20 to $30 billion.

And that is why a Bush administration is far more likely to lead to an economic Dunkirk. Bush, unlike Dukakis, is set in concrete against a tax increase. He even wants another round of tax cuts, to reduce capital gains rates to a needlessly low 15 percent, widening the deficit by another $4 billion to $8 billion. To be sure, among his senior economic advisers Martin Feldstein, for one, favors higher taxes. But Bush's bravado no-tax pledge ("Read my lips") means that it would take awhile to bring Bush around. Given how quickly the relentless dynamic of higher inflation/tighter money/slower growth/bigger deficits could take hold, a Bush conversion after a decent interval—say, next spring—could well be too late.

Dukakis, on the other hand, has left himself a nice escape hatch. He would raise taxes, he says, only as a last resort. But as part of a grand fiscal deal to keep the recovery going, a moderate tax increase coupled with spending cuts, tax enforcement, and a bargain with the Fed would look statesmanlike. If Dukakis were persuaded of the political and economic wisdom of such a bargain, he would have no ideological qualms about consummating it. As part of the anti-inflation medicine, a Democratic administration would also be better positioned to carry out a successful "incomes policy," trading voluntary wage restraint by labor unions for other labor goals. Republicans tend to dismiss that idea as unacceptably dirigiste.

IN ALL of this, there is an ironic twist. Generally, the bond market prefers Republicans, who are supposed to be champions of sound money. Other things being equal, a Bush election would produce a nice rally in the bond market, while a Dukakis win would give Wall Street the jitters. The more jitters, the greater the pressure on the Fed to follow through with a tight money policy.

But this time, it is Bush who should be giving money markets pause. The one scenario likely to keep stagflation from breaking out—an early deal with the Fed—is the one that George Bush is least likely to bring to pass. If markets truly have the prescience attributed to them by the Rational Expectations gang, a Bush election won't be very good for the bond market either, which of course makes an early fiscal deal all the more urgent.

Doubtless, a Dukakis administration would have to absorb at least token domestic spending cuts as part of an overall deal for a tax increase. This would be painful for Democrats, but an early fiscal deal is the one solution that would give a new administration some breathing space and the possibility of modest spending increases later on. Without such a deal, a recession would require the administration to devote all of its resources to managing a rising tide of red ink.

In sum, Dunkirk is again at hand. If Dukakis is elected, he would have at least the possibility of avoiding a rout and going on to lead an economically (and politically) viable administration. But if Bush wins, he would be very likely to leave the American economy stranded on the beach.

ROBERT KUTTNER

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LET KOOP DO IT

BY TAYLOR BRANCH

ONLY TWO YEARS after the last bombs-away overhaul, and 15 years after President Nixon announced that we had turned the corner in the war on drugs, Congress and the White House are concocting a new drug law that would unleash the military and the death penalty. Among other measures that would fall heavily on addicts and teetotalers alike, the law would deny federal contracts to any firm lacking an approved policy against drugs in the workplace. Also, having flattened whole South American governments under the weight of American-fed drug mobs richer than Capone ever dreamed, we would flatten them again by defoliating their countryside. The newest dragnet would get the government off our backs and into our bathrooms, requiring random urinalysis for nearly everyone, even though the tests have been fooled by substances ranging from Advil to poppy-seed bagels. (The Pentagon once admitted that nearly half its 9,000 urine-based disciplinary cases may have involved false results.)

Officials refuse to predict that any of this would actually reduce the use of drugs. They are unsure whether they want to drive the price of drugs up or down, whether to give users 20 years or treatment. A maze of drug bureaucracies are locked in turf battles and even real ones, arresting one another's undercover agents. Ed Meese's task force on the drug problem found government complicity in only three countries—Cuba, Nicaragua, and Bulgaria—and made no mention at all of corruption within American law enforcement.

We are unnerved, ready to try anything. Baltimore Mayor Kurt Schmoke proved that last spring when he suggested that we might do better to legalize illicit drugs. As the first major officeholder who dared to suggest such an idea, he scrambled the accepted image of the problem. An Ivy League black man and a former prosecutor who had spent years putting dealers behind bars, Schmoke announced that he was tired of going to the funerals of police officers killed by drug dealers. As mayor of the city with the nation's highest teenage murder rate, he tried to distinguish between the evils of drug consumption per se and the unintended evils caused by society's prohibitions. He said the law itself has turned the inner city into a war zone. Anti-drug enforcement has created a netherworld of stupendous, artificial profit that now sucks children into a deadly version of NBA fool's gold. Legalizing drugs would eliminate this undertow just as swiftly as the repeal of Prohibition wiped out the speakeasy gangsters. "I don't know of any kid who is making money running booze," said Schmoke.

Still, few are persuaded. According to a recent Gallup Poll, about 80 percent of Americans oppose legalizing even marijuana. So far, the debate between crackdown and legalization has merely advertised a nearly universal desire to do something drastic.

Schmoke's appeal to the logic of Prohibition reminds us how thoroughly we have banished that astonishing drama from historical memory. Prohibition is a lost epoch of tenacious sincerity and forgotten effect. In revolt against the toxic, demoralizing properties of alcohol, Americans sacrificed almost half of all federal revenues (alcohol taxes produced some $240 million in 1916, compared with income taxes of only $68 million), and we cut the booze habit so deeply that per capita alcohol consumption did not regain pre-Prohibition levels until 1970. Yet, we changed our minds, and undid our fundamental instrument of government for the first and only time. For all that, you have to squint to find Prohibition in standard histories as anything more than an "experiment," leavened by unfortunate but colorful gangland entertainment. We are sensitive about our Puritanism, and especially about our mad lurchings between liberty and repression. Future historians most likely will see the current drug debate as an all-too-human comedy in pain, like the contortions of Prohibition. On no other subject except race are we so evasive about our past, and none other remains so contemporary.

One aspect of our drug history that ought to be reviewed, especially by the legalizers, is the checkered performance of the health industry. Organized medicine opposed—then secured loophole privileges within—both the Volstead Act (Prohibition) and the first federal ban on narcotics in 1914. These laws arrived together in the Woodrow Wilson era as liberal reforms, overriding conservative fears of intrusive government. At a time when medicine still cured few diseases, doctors, pharmacists, and other competing factions of the health profession were struggling to raise their historically low status. Most "drug stores" were just that, and many offered nothing but preparations with narcotics, such as "Hooper's Anodyne, the Infant's Friend," and "Mrs. Winslow's Soothing Syrup." Doctor's resented the druggists for "recommending" remedies such as their laudanum elixirs and their cocaine-based hemorrhoid balms, while the druggists in turn resented the physicians who ran high-

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Volume One of Taylor Branch's biography of Martin Luther King, *Parting the Waters: America in the King Years 1954-1963*, will be published by Simon and Schuster in November and will be the main selection of the Book-of-the-Month Club.

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volume dispensaries from their back door. Eventually they reached a compromise to protect each other and the drug companies, shutting out the street vendors, mail-order houses, and other lowbrow competitors.

The health industry brought all the major illicit drugs into popular usage. A predecessor of Merck began manufacturing morphine compounds in 1832. Parke-Davis (now Warner Lambert) introduced its famous Coca Cordial along with its cocaine ointments and sprays. Parke-Davis also invented PCP in 1957, as an animal anesthetic. Even LSD, imported from a German pharmaceutical house, was hailed by health professionals in the early 1960s as a wonder drug that promised scientifically maintained positive attitudes for all Americans. Most of the narcotics prosecutions early in this century targeted the notorious "dope doctors" and their confederates in the medicinal trade.

By the late Prohibition years, bacteriology and other miracles of legitimate medicine had earned doctors greater public stature than the federal enforcers themselves enjoyed. In 1930 the Bureau of Narcotics ordered its agents to leave doctors and pharmacists alone and arrest only the uneducated smugglers. Seven years later, when the government's "Reefer Madness" campaign secured the first ban on marijuana, the AMA made only a halfhearted effort to protect cannabis corn plasters and other marijuana-based prescriptions.

Doctors gradually abandoned their right to dispense most of the banned drugs, each of which carried the political stigma of a hated, lower-class minority (from "opium-addled Chinese" immigrants to "cocaine-crazed Negro rapists"). But medicine never spurned the desire of upstanding patients to manipulate their moods through chemistry. Quite apart from tobacco, alcohol, and illicit narcotics, health experts have made Americans a heavily drugged people even in proportion to wealth. In 1986 retail pharmacists alone filled 1.56 *billion* prescriptions for restricted drugs. The two leading categories—cardiovascular regulators and antibiotics—are reassuringly medical, but next come 132 million "psychotherapeutics," a medical euphemism for uppers and downers; prescriptions for 112 "antidepressants," led by an expensive pick-me-up called Elavil, have risen fivefold in the past generation.

Prescription drugs in combination with alcohol kill more people by overdose than heroin. Codeine-based medicines produce nearly as many overdose deaths as cocaine. A single depressant, diazepam, kills far more people by pharmaceutically pure overdoses than street-stomped, bootleg PCP.

All through this hay fever season, advertisements have promoted a new, drowsiness-free antihistamine, suitable for the general public, in broadcasts ending "See your doctor." Sneezers are thus invited to pay an office-visit fee of $40 or so for the prescribed right to visit a pharmacist acting as intermediary for the patent-holder and ad-maker, Merrill-Dow, to whom they can pay about $60 for 25 Seldane pills. This pricing structure bears a disturbing resemblance to the heavily populated markup chain for illegal substances. Indeed, the overall record of the health industry in the field of mentally active chemicals ought to be a sober warning to today's advocates of legalized drugs, nearly all of whom tout a "medical approach" to drug users. Health officials, like wardens, prefer to hold the keys. They might be willing to prescribe a "proper dose" of cocaine or marijuana, but they reserve the right to define the terms, to change their minds, and to collect a fee for treatment.

Charles Rangel, chairman of the House Select Committee on Narcotics Abuse and Control, opposes legalization. He knows that junkies, potheads, and even yuppie experimenters would rebel against a "See your doctor" alternative. If enough of them stuck with their black market dealers, the illicit market would continue, with the health industry tagging along for legal profit. Rangel has been able to confound legalizers simply by asking practical questions: Where would drugs be distributed—at hospitals, pharmacies, convenience stores? What would be the allowable doses? Who would be allowed to buy medicinal drugs—admitted addicts only, recreational users, new users, kids? In response, advocates of the medical approach have fumbled for a dignified blend of whoopee and whoa.

Rangel expresses shrill urgency in all directions. He calls for tougher anti-drug laws and huge leaps in the enforcement budget, saying the country is flooded with poison because we have not yet begun to fight. Yet he also says that the excesses of the drug war already have "trampled the Constitution." Rangel evokes George Patton on war and William Kunstler on civil liberties. While heaping scorn on a bankrupt anti-drug policy from both directions, he nevertheless defends its tested logic against the dangerously muddled ideas of the drug legalizers. Even then, his bombastic derision is well chosen for possible retreat or adjustment. Rangel never denounces legalization in principle. He merely demands from it a detailed, logical practicality that escapes the lab-coated reformers and the dungeon-stuffing draconians alike.

THE PROBLEM WITH legalization, however, is not its practical mechanics. Surgeon General Everett Koop has shown that in his relatively obscure war on tobacco and alcohol. Koop's rules of engagement are democratic and simple. You license private distributors carefully and tax the drugs as heavily as possible, ideally to the point just short of creating a criminal black market. You try to ban commercial advertising for harmful drugs, even though their sale is legal. You concentrate police powers on two tasks: prohibiting sales to children, and enforcing strict sanctions against those who cause injury to others while under the influence.

Although Koop has taken no position in the recent debates over illegal drugs, the logic of his approach applies to them as well. Does Koop want to require drinkers to get a Prohibition-style doctor's prescription for gin, vodka, and beer? Ridiculous—even though in 1984 alcohol took the lives of 11,111 Americans for every death even vaguely associated with marijuana. Does Koop recommend outlawing the manufacture and sale of cigarettes? No, he resists the temptations—even though alcohol and tobacco together kill more than 300 Americans for every one who dies from all illegal drugs put together, including heroin

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and cocaine. Would Koop or even the most slack-brained drug legalizer recommend that heroin be sold in restaurant vending machines? Of course not. Such machines currently make a mockery of state laws against the sale of cigarettes to minors. Koop would outlaw them.

Koop's latest government studies argue scientifically that nicotine is as addictive as morphine and heroin. Even so, he has not called in the doctors or the Untouchables. For a generation, the campaign against tobacco consumption has illustrated the democratic power of communication. The smoking rate fell from 30.4 percent to 26.5 percent in 1986 alone, and continues to fall—largely because people have come to accept the government's health warnings. By contrast, official propaganda against cocaine and marijuana still meets skepticism and ridicule.

The legal status of alcohol and tobacco allows Koop to tell people exactly what they are consuming, and what the risks are. With street drugs, purity and contents are guesswork for the government and Len Bias alike. Also, there is no room for Koop's credible, objective discernment regarding currently illegal drugs because their criminal status almost obliges authority figures to exaggerations of demonology. Officials obscure their own truths in brittle, hysterical cant, as in the extraordinary obsession with professional athletes. Impressionable youths wonder how athletes can perform amazing feats of mental and physical prowess under the influence of drugs that are presented as deadly poisons. The elaborate drug enforcement programs advertise sensitivity and doubt rather than virtue. Public relations and criminal repression lie down poorly together.

KOOP BELIEVES that cigarettes can be licked by common sense and willpower. His grim studies showing that nicotine is as addictive as heroin have a logical flip side: kicking heroin is no tougher than kicking cigarettes. This perspective humanizes the evil, which lies somewhere within nearly everyone but can be refused or fought, as ex-smokers and struggling smokers may attest. There are some 30 million fewer smokers now than a decade ago—an extraordinary decline attributable to quitters, tobacco deaths, and to younger people who have refused to start. More than likely, the minuscule support for drug legalization owes much to their accomplishment. Among the abstainers, many baby boomers turning 40 may dimly believe that they have outlived their most dangerous propensities.

Early in Prohibition, a Texas senator declared that "there is as much chance of repealing the 18th Amendment as there is for a hummingbird to fly to the planet Mars with the Washington Monument tied to its tail." Only when Pierre du Pont, John D. Rockefeller Jr., and other pillars of conservative wealth converted to the cause of repeal did organized agitation begin in 1927. It took two more years before well-financed repealers began cranking out propaganda studies claiming that we could more than wipe out the federal deficit by taxing alcohol instead of chasing Capone. The industrial magnates reached an unlikely alliance with the immigrant-soaked Democratic Party. Even then, only the catastrophe of Depression brought the wets to victory. It is barely conceivable that a similar constituency of dollar-minded conservatives, reformers, and good-timers might prevail someday regarding other drugs. If they did, Koop would get a chance to become not only public servant of the decade but also of the century.

LEGALIZATION on the Koop model would produce numerous immediate benefits. Some are obvious, and the speculative, non-fearful side of our brains can perceive others through the fog of present understanding. Looking back on an imaginary Year One of legalization, we see first that a staggering $140 billion made its way back from the drug chieftains through the pushers to the buyers and into the aboveground economy. Some $25 billion went straightway to the federal Treasury, solving a Gramm-Rudman problem that had paralyzed Congress for months. This was only an accountant's relief, however, compared with the swift and magnificent destruction of the drug empire. Acres upon acres of pleasure boats and private airplanes were reclaimed at fire-sale prices by members of the legitimate topsider class. Whole warehouses of .38s, sawed-off shotguns, and—from the big guys—Uzis and AK-47s rusted in benign disuse, along with the most sophisticated electronic tools of the smuggler's trade. A generation's painstaking investment in human machinery—bribed judges, overseas connections, look-the-other-way cops, and fixed lawyers—collapsed into a useless, unsightly heap of corruptions bought but undelivered. Nearly 40 percent of all organized crime activity vanished. The livelihoods of some 700,000 assorted street and parlor pushers disappeared, including an estimated 180,000 jobs for cocaine dealers.

The value of illicit drugs plummeted toward zero. A batch of the ghetto brainscorcher "loveboat," which had fetched more than $500,000 when packaged as drug-soaked parsley joints, suddenly was worth little more than the $500 in chemicals required to make a gallon of the active ingredient, PCP. As the prices of other drugs shrank by factors of ten to 100, drug users left with their rightful owners the money and goods they otherwise would have stolen to pay 90 to 98 percent of the underworld's former demands. Drug gangs and sinister cartels no longer killed policemen, bystanders, and each other in wars over outlaw riches. Homicide rates in many cities dropped 60 percent overnight. In New York law enforcement officers tore up more than 80 percent of their search warrants, freeing themselves from their most hazardous assignments and the courts from a mountain of paperwork. Policemen threw down their new anti-pusher Green Beret flak jackets and 9mm semiautomatics. They looked like policemen again, instead of Beirut stormtroopers. Similarly, kids looked like kids. Twelve-year-olds turned in their beepers, pistols, and bulletproof vests, which they had come to wear under their $150 GorTex jackets.

The end of the illegal drug market arrived as salvation for bulging prisons, whose inmate population had doubled to 600,000 in the 1980s even as the drug traffic rose by half. More than 70,000 prisoners had been incarcerated for

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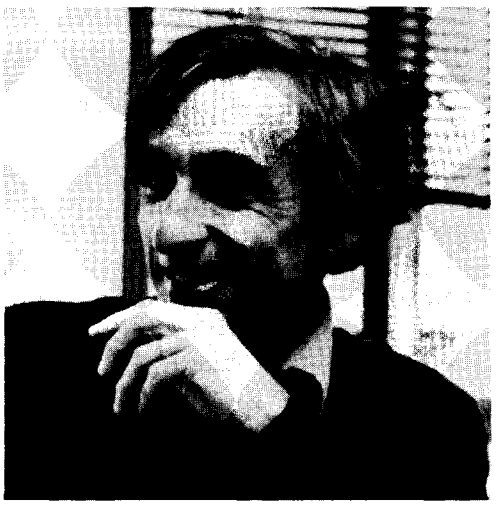

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buying or selling drugs. In addition, going by police estimates that half the ordinary property crimes had been committed to service the astronomical costs of drug use, at least another 100,000 no longer had reasons to get locked up. A prison population that had been growing at a steady rate of 900 new prisoners per day—adding $18 million in annual service costs each morning, and demanding costly new construction—turned instead into a small exodus of those convicted of lesser trafficking crimes without violence. By parole, amnesty, and attrition, nearly a quarter of the prisoners were free within a year.

Law enforcement units felt proportionate relief. The U.S. attorneys, whose collective budget had grown sixfold under President Reagan, had 10,000 fewer cases to prosecute. Among many who found other work were the graphic artists who received $17,000 to chart the intricacies of the "Pizza Connection" heroin ring for a jury. One thousand special agents of the FBI's new narcotics units were furloughed or reassigned. Moreover, the majority of internal corruption cases disappeared at all levels. Since the heroin from the famous French Connection bust disappeared from the police evidence room in the 1970s, corruption had grown from a novelty into a crippling, everyday scourge. (No sooner had President Reagan revoked J. Edgar Hoover's lifelong order to keep FBI agents out of the "dirty" drug war than the first drug-crooked FBI agent drew ten years for taking $850,000 in bribes. An elite Strike Force prosecutor had gone down for $210,000 and a sailboat. Corruption investigations of some 300 Justice Department officials reached public notice between 1983 and 1985. In Miami, after a shift of narcotics detectives was caught killing the dealers and stealing the drugs, a massive internal investigation "purged" one-tenth of the entire police force.)

But the most immediate relief came to the civilians who had been wounded in the cross fires of the drug wars. Aside from their feeling of safety and well-being, the victims had lost nearly $8 billion in cash and personal property. Spared these losses, these citizens also saw their insurance costs plummet.

LARGE AS the $8 billion drug-robbery figure might sound, it represents only a small fraction of the $140 billion spent annually for illegal drugs. The huge balance points to two lessons about the trade: first, the consumers are more "ordinary" than commonly conceived, spending mostly their own money to buy hideously expensive luxury goods; and second, many of the thefts for drug money probably go unreported. Studies show that an inner-city heroin addict commonly commits up to 2,000 muggings and burglaries a year. Getting 20 cents on the dollar to fence hot property, thieves had to strip nearly $25 billion worth of bare-bones possessions from the nation's poorest neighborhoods—usually uninsured—for each $5 billion of the drug balance that we might fairly ascribe to unreported crimes.

Although we would hope to have Koop, or someone like him, crusading to drive down consumption of the new drugs along with the old ones, there would be enormous new "sin" tax revenues as well. At the modest rate of ten dollars per ounce, taxing marijuana alone would produce $20 billion at present levels of estimated consumption. Combined with savings in crime and enforcement, legalization would provide more than $100 billion of tax relief.

But what are the offsetting costs of legal, cheap drugs? Although predictions vary wildly, some experts see a 20-fold jump in heroin addicts to ten million, plus 60 or 70 million cocaine addicts. These gigantic numbers point to social doom. A Koop model of legalized drug war has received scant attention for one principal reason: fear. Chairman Rangel's last annual report put the matter most nakedly by declaring that people simply cannot resist the pleasure of drugs. "This human failing has proven to be universal," said the House select committee. "When drugs are available, they will be used; the more they are available, the more they will be used."

This credo takes us to the heart of the matter. If it is true, then the "Just Say No" hoopla is a farce, because people lack the capacity to make a choice. The state must say no for them. The "human failing" theory also strips some of the condescension from the anti-drug crusade. Puritans have always liked to call in the sheriff against those they see as threatening, moral inferiors, whether they be atheists, gamblers, addicts, or abortionists. Such power reinforces a sense of moral superiority in the controllers, and it is convenient to assume that temptation would ruin someone else—society's weaklings. However, the Rangel committee admits a dose of insecurity beneath the noblesse. It suggests that the Puritans themselves would succumb if they could pick up a packet of medical-quality cocaine or marijuana at the local vice market.

The fear catches all of us at some level. I worry about my children, even as I bridle at the notion that the government can protect them better than I can teach them to protect themselves. Why take the risk? It seems better to accept the hemorrhage of current laws and hope the menace will decline. Part of the apprehension is grounded in social norms; illicit drugs raise the fear of gutter depravity. There is no Rx respectability about addiction, no Dewar's Profile of a junkie.

To fight the entire drug war by Everett Koop's rules would require disciplined courage within individual citizens and enormous trust between them. But so does the practice of democracy itself. Whether or not we ever choose Schmoke's path, the debate over drug legalization ought to be valuable because it raises fundamental questions of political identity. Our whole theory of government is built on the conviction that citizens have the strength and the right to govern themselves. The drug laws, like royalist theory, rest on the contrary proposition that most people cannot follow their own best interests without force of external authority. They suggest an atomized nation of people who remain suckling babes anywhere outside their narrow expertise, in fields ranging from health to national security. Even if this admission goes down easily in the emotionally charged minefield of drugs, it may alert us to a more general collapse of democratic faith. □

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STANLEY KAUFFMANN ON FILMS

Persisting Questions

The memory of justice, which is the title of one of Marcel Ophuls's documentaries, is the theme of all of them, including his new one. France under the Occupation, Northern Ireland in its continuing agony, the Nuremberg trials, and now his film about Klaus Barbie—all are about the idea of justice. And, which is perhaps their greatest virtue, all of them end with more questions than they had when they began. The memory of justice, as he used the phrase in his Nuremberg film, was an allusion to Plato's concept of an absolute justice that existed in some previous perfect state of the soul, dimly remembered now and much longed for. The Barbie case, at first glance so chillingly clear, is a reminder of how distant that absolute concept is.

Hotel Terminus: The Life and Times of Klaus Barbie
(Samuel Goldwyn)

Hotel Terminus: The Life and Times of Klaus Barbie is the full title, but it will surely be known by the first two words, the savagely apt name of the hotel in Lyons where Barbie had his headquarters during the Occupation. Ophuls was in Lyons during Barbie's trial in 1987, but he had begun work on the film four years earlier, retracing Barbie's steps after the end of the war to South America. (Unlike Ophuls's two earlier films, in which foreign-speakers' voices were faded under English-speakers' voices, the new film uses conventional subtitles.) The footage of Barbie himself and of his daughter seems to be TV material; virtually all the rest is original.

Numerous interviews, interwoven and juxtaposed, are as usual the bulk of the film, and as usual they display Ophuls's extraordinary competence as an interviewer. Some of the many subjects are retired officers of the American Counter Intelligence Corps, Regis Debray, people who knew or were somehow involved with Barbie in Bolivia and Peru, three billiard players in Lyons who serve as a people's chorus, and Barbie's smooth defense attorney, Jacques Vergès. Pivotal, of course, are interviews with some of those who survived Gestapo activities under Barbie, victims or direct witnesses; and there are interviews with people connected with the school at Izieu, from which he sent 41 Jewish children to their deaths. (I must note a cinematic overtone. Lyons and the shots of the Fort Montluc prison are reminders of Robert Bresson's masterpiece about the Occupation, *A Man Escaped*, which takes place there. Though Ophuls doesn't mention this resonance, he must certainly be aware of it.)

Claude Lanzmann, the maker of *Shoah*, appears briefly in conversation with Ophuls, and this prompts a comparison. *Shoah* is a gigantic and masterly history of mass murder, recorded by a few of the few survivors. Ophuls's aim in *Hotel Terminus* is quite different. He is not primarily intent on recording details of barbarism. He concentrates on the being, the postwar career, the postwar effect of the chief of the barbarities: to put these matters, as well as the wartime activities, under the rubric of possible justice.

The American officers are quite frank in their statements that they used Barbie after the war—as a lead to possible counterespionage centers. The French historians and commentators admit that everyone used war criminals after the war for this purpose. Americans and others reveal how they got Barbie out of Europe later on, through a Vatican connection. Extensive interviews with friends, enemies, associates, and investigators in Peru and Bolivia paint the picture of an able businessman, a shrewd manipulator, an amiable neighbor, whom they knew under another name with no clue about his past. French rightists suggest that all this fuss about matters long past will only inflame anti-Semitism because, as they believe, the World Jewish Congress was behind the tracking of Barbie.

The rightists' repellent concern does in fact highlight some of the questions raised by the film. What point was served by hauling this sick 71-year-old man back to France to stand trial? (On war crimes there is a statute of limitations; there is none on crimes against humanity. Barbie was convicted of the latter.) Wasn't he, even more strikingly than those indicted in Nuremberg, only a military man carrying out orders? Suppose that, as seems the case, Barbie enjoyed carrying out his orders: are we to distinguish between soldiers who enjoy executing barbarous orders and those who do it reluctantly? If not, then why Barbie? Because, among the 4,000 deaths he oversaw, there were some children? How much of an exception is that fact in the Nazi annals? And, as Vergès says, if Barbie is to be tried, what about the high-ranking French officers who admitted to barbarities in Algeria and were not prosecuted?

These are the kinds of questions—obvious yet bitterly complex—that have been plaguing Ophuls for decades. It has been his mission not to try to answer them, thank heaven, but to insist through skillful films that we face them too. But he is paying a price for his de-

FILMS WORTH SEEING

The Last Temptation of Christ. Martin Scorsese's energetic direction and Willem Dafoe's forthright Jesus do much to hold this lumpy but serious account together. (Reviewed 9/12&19/88)

Midnight Run. Robert De Niro and Charles Grodin surf on the crests and hollows of this slam-bang comedy about an investigator and a criminal traveling cross-country. (8/29/88)

Pascali's Island. Political intrigue and art robbery, an Aegean island, 1908. Ben Kingsley as a zealous Turkish police informer shines in this increasingly murky script. (8/8&15/88)

Red Sorghum. A Chinese attempt at a folk epic—a young couple weathering dramatic adversities and raising a child in the late 1920s. The acting and directing are remarkable, the screenplay is patched up, especially the finish. (10/17/88)

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votion to his subject: it's wearing him down as a filmmaker. He can still deploy sequences that are self-contained dramas within the larger drama, such as the account of René Hardy, first a Resistance fighter, then a possible traitor, then a defendant at his postwar trial, now a gutless drunk. Ophuls can still tell much in one composition, like the first long shot of Vergès's quietly elegant office. But Ophuls now sometimes sinks to banalities: he introduces the Bolivia sections with a shot of llamas grazing in the Andes. He indulges in pictorial underlining; when speakers mention Eisenhower and Mitterrand, he inserts shots of Eisenhower and Mitterrand.

More gravely, his discrimination is blunted. *The Sorrow and the Pity* ran four-and-a-half hours and was worth every moment. *The Memory of Justice* was the same length and barely justified its length. *Hotel Terminus* is the same length and would benefit by being an hour shorter. Particularly in Bolivia and Peru, much of the footage repeats and repeats an easily grasped proposition: that Barbie slipped cleverly into civilian life and yet, as far as a civilian could, revealed touches of his intrinsic character. Some of this is interesting, but little of it relates to Ophuls's real concern—justice. If Barbie had entered a monastery the moment he reached South America, it would not have altered his previous actions or the questions about them raised here.

Possibly the worst effect that Ophuls's work seems to have had on him is that he now slips into comedy. In one sequence he parodies a telephone conversation in which a person with whom he wants to arrange an interview is evasive. In another sequence, when a woman tells him that her husband whom he wants to see is in the garden, Ophuls wanders through the empty garden lifting cabbage leaves and calling the man's name. These are worse than bad jokes, they are disturbing.

All these regrettable matters seem less the result of apathy than of increasing numbness before the size of the questions he raises. I once knew a young lawyer who was appointed a public defender in a large city and had to quit after a few years because, he said, he felt a growing numbness toward the wretchedness and misery he was forced to deal with every day and was afraid of what the result would be in him. Ophuls reminded me of that lawyer.

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Ophuls is charged again and again to confront these questions. When Barbie is interviewed in Bolivia just before he is put on the plane for France, a reporter asks him about his Nazi past. He replies coolly, as if he were stumping the reporter with an unanswerable question, "What is a Nazi?" His daughter, interviewed in Austria, responds the same way. The fact that both father and daughter thought they had trumped reporters with that reply would be almost enough to spur Ophuls to make another film.

ALMOST CLASSIC

Stories in an Almost Classical Mode by Harold Brodkey

(Knopf, 596 pp., $24.95)

The puzzling career of Harold Brodkey offers a test case for the uses of fiction. He is a writer with a certain undeniable gift who began in the most undemanding of conventional modes—publishing chiefly in the glossy magazines of high consumerism. (His early collection, *First Love and Other Sorrows*, is made up entirely of stories that appeared in the *New Yorker*, with the exception of one that ran in *Mademoiselle*; the pieces in the new volume, which comprises all his subsequent published work, are again mostly from the *New Yorker*, with *Esquire* a distant second.) Since the publication of *First Love* in 1958, Brodkey has been known to be engaged in a large novel called *Party of Animals*, and roughly the last two-thirds of *Stories in an Almost Classical Mode* are pieces that would appear to be fragments or spin-offs of that project. Whether on the evidence of these pieces, published intermittently from 1973 to the present, or whether through the sheer momentum of rumor, a good many literary people in the know have been saying that Brodkey's novel, if and when it is done, will be an innovative achievement of commanding power.

Now that all of Brodkey's production since the '50s is available for inspection between hard covers, it is clear that his fictional enterprise has gone through three distinct phases. *First Love* is made up of nine rather slight stories, some of them brief sketches of only a few pages, all of them pastel renderings of familiar scenes of growing up and of bourgeois domestic life: acquiring a first girlfriend, a quarrel between college buddies on a European bicycle trip, a young mother anxiously nursing her first baby, the daunting appearance of an unexpectedly authoritative new baby sitter. All these situations are handled with an efficient precision of notation and dialogue that must have pleased many of the readers of the *New Yorker* in giving back to them the circumstances of their lives in clarified prose. The big problem with these early stories is that there is scarcely anything in them that transcends the banality of their subject matter, providing real insight into it or transforming it into the occasion for a distinctive aesthetic experience.

Brodkey himself must have sensed something of this limitation. The half-dozen stories he published between 1963 and 1973 are more expansive, richer in detail, some of them reaching novella proportions. All are concerned in one way or another with character and destiny, and all offer a good deal to engage one's attention. Their central flaw, it seems to me, is that they work with plots and characters that cry out for patient novelistic elaboration through hundreds of pages of accumulated details, and instead we get summary, flat assertion, and a verbal gesturing toward a concreteness of experience that is largely absent from the stories. At times Brodkey tries to compensate for this sketchiness with mannered metaphor, inadvertently illustrating what "fine writing" might mean for the glossies: "Sukie was a prism in which sunlight broke up into a rainbow." "Like paint on a wall, they grow cracked and yellow, those two, but they adhere." ". . . Intensities and rivalries and everything ugly breathed out through the confessional as through a whale's spout." And perhaps most egregious, even if it is attributed to a character's consciousness: "He loved and suffered with a singleness of purpose that reminded Avram of the

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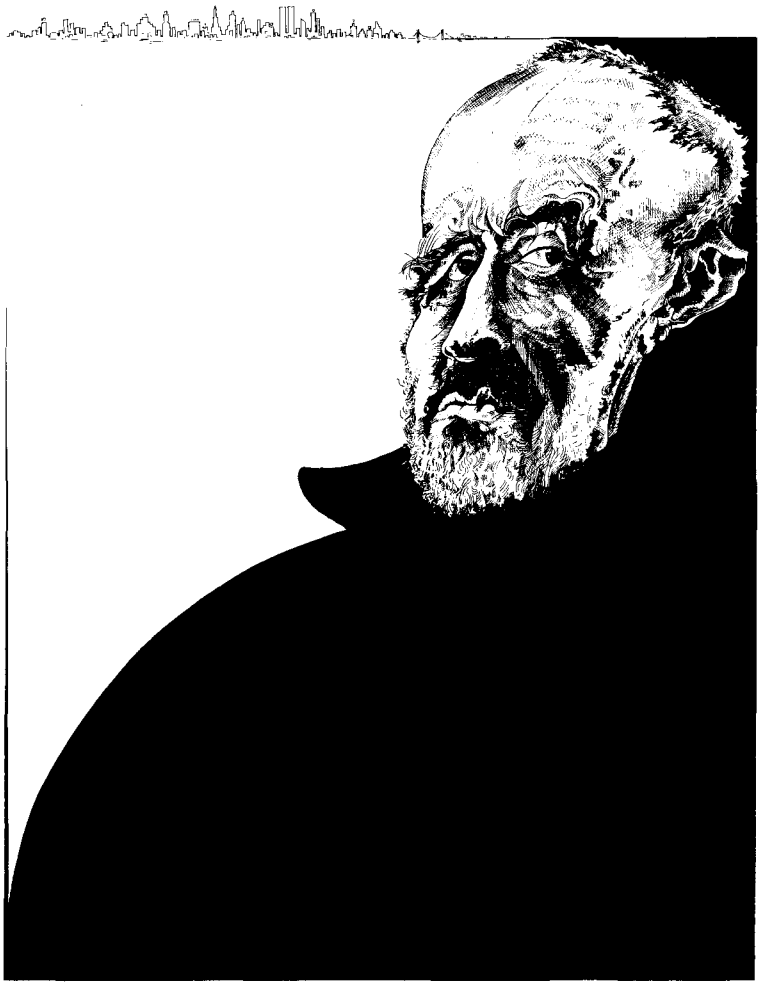
curved, thin legs of French antiques."

The one wholly successful story in this phase is "Innocence," which appeared in 1973 in *American Review*. It is also, perhaps instructively, the only piece by Brodkey that treats sex with a high degree of explicitness. The first-person narrator announces early on, "I distrust summaries, any kind of gliding through time," and professes to "admire the authority of being on one's knees in front of the event." The full presence of the event is precisely what is too often lacking in Brodkey's incipiently novelistic stories, all in the third person, of the ten previous years. Here the main event is carnal, rendered to the last pulsation and the last twist of athletic caress: a young man's fiercely determined effort to bring his hitherto unresponsive girlfriend to her first orgasm. The situation is the same as that of Norman Mailer's celebrated "The Time of Her Time," but this male protagonist is free of the bullfighter's impulse to subdue the female object that characterizes Mailer's hero; and the story is more than a tour de force of verbal evocation of the erotic, because it evinces such a subtle understanding of all that is at stake morally and psychologically between the two lovers in everything that happens, or does not happen, in the act of coition.



DRAWING BY VINT LAWRENCE FOR THE NEW REPUBLIC

Brodkey has been trying, since 1973, to reach that authority of kneeling before the event through the unstable medium of memory. All of the stories are now retrospective first-person narrations, almost all of them going back to childhood and adolescence in a suburb of St. Louis in the '30s and '40s. One assumes that the stories are essentially autobiographical. A few details vary from piece to piece. In some of the stories the mother is dying of cancer, in others she is not. The names given the mother, father, and child sometimes change. Other narrative data remain constant: the boy is adopted at an early age by the couple after his own mother's death; they have a daughter several years older; the adoptive mother is magnetic, domineering, difficult; the boy is a whiz in school, grows to be a great gangling adolescent. The family setting of this autobiographical fiction is second-generation American Jewish, but the ethnic identity is, in most respects, an irrelevancy. For Brodkey offers a microscopic vision of an imploded nuclear family in which all that really matters are the looming personalities of mother, father, and sister, with social contacts accorded no more than intermittent glimpses.

In the most recent of these stories, the narrator wonders about the "necessity I feel and have for the impossible return, the approximate recurrence, of certain smokey moments, images that arise only in this person's or that person's company," and construes that necessity to be "what I mean by love." This statement nicely defines the radical nature of Brodkey's undertaking over the last decade and a half, but it also intimates what is problematic about it. Other aspects of fiction—above all, plot and progressive time—have been drastically subordinated to the pursuit of the impossible return, the evocation of those smokey moments. The prose becomes densely lyric and the stories themselves terrifically static. Characteristically, present-tense narration often displaces the past tense as the narrator tries to get back to the actuality of the remembered moment, sometimes turning the story into an achronological shuffling of related experiences.

Because all this is anchored in the remembering consciousness of the narrator, what we get, for the most part through an elaboration of metaphor, is the feel and look and affective impingement of the experience, object, or person on the remembering subject. One might call this procedure lyric sensationism. Here, for example, is the boy's report of being hit by his big sister: "The thick petals of galling sensation and of numbness, of half-sickness, of darkness, were as innocent and ignorant as any flower, a blossoming of darkness." Here is one of his many sightings of his adoptive mother: "She had a lonely, steady, circumambient darkness, an aureole of sin that was also a floating nimbus of surprise at the unexpectedness of having people desire her."

Such transcriptions of affective sensation and perception tend to run on for long, cumulative paragraphs. Let me offer a suggestion of their cumulative movement by quoting two full sentences from a smokey moment of the boy's father speaking to him:

> Mostly, if I hear him well, the fog-chambered street vanishes, the silver and brown spaces, some of which are bright silver off and on as the clouds and the sky shift in meaning and in luminescence. Instead, I see what he says, blinkingly, a squinched, knotted, vertiginously knotted picture, knotted on itself and yet clear, too,

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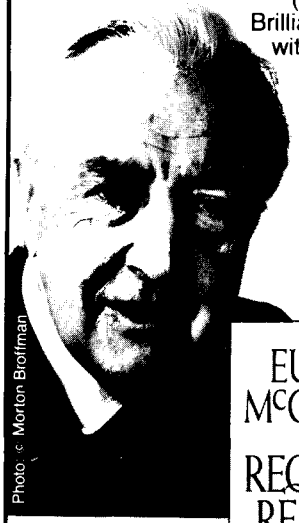

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a sort of active picture, mysterious and lucid, as a dream is, but with his direct authority.

There is something remarkable about such writing. But to put the question bluntly, is it, when sustained to the length of a whole story, good writing?

There are no doubt some critics who will hasten to acclaim Brodkey as an American Proust, but the crucial respect in which he falls far below Proust is his being confined within the narrow limits of lyric sensationism. Proust was also an addict of the impossible return, but implicated in that imaginative effort was a large and complex vision of society, culture, moral life, aesthetic value, and the kaleidoscopic intricacies of individual character. By contrast, what the reader of the later Brodkey is likely to experience is merely a constant, restless fine-tuning of language to catch the delicate edge of sensation remembered.

There is, in the end, something that seems excessively personal in Brodkey's pursuit of the evanescent past. If the meaning of that pursuit, as he says, is love, then it is too much his own unconditional love for the voice of his father, the perplexing narcissism of his mother, the intensity of sibling rivalry, the look and smell of a Midwestern street a half century ago. However sensitively his language may limn those objects of recollection, not enough goes on in the fiction to build bridges from the island of private experience into that larger world that imaginative writing at its best can engage with depth and illumination.

ROBERT ALTER

Robert Alter's most recent book, *The Invention of Hebrew Prose*, has just been published by the University of Washington Press.

FRONT MAN

A Bright Shining Lie: John Paul Vann and America in Vietnam by Neil Sheehan

(Random House, 861 pp., $24.95)

In Neil Sheehan's apt and accurate phrase, John Paul Vann was "the soldier of the war in Vietnam." He began his extraordinary career there as a military adviser to a South Vietnamese division, and he went on to become the single greatest influence on the young American journalists in Vietnam who were to come into such fierce conflict with their government. Then, in 1963, Vann suddenly quit the Army, in what appeared to be an act of conscience. He returned to Vietnam in 1965 as a low-level civilian province adviser, and rose, through sheer energy and skill, to become the only American civilian ever to command American troops in combat. In the summer of 1972, after almost single-handedly saving the Central Highlands from the North Vietnamese during the Easter Offensive, Vann was killed when his helicopter crashed near the town of Kontum.

Neil Sheehan, who met John Vann during assignments in Vietnam for UPI and the *New York Times*, begins his book at Vann's funeral. As he looked around the chapel adjoining Arlington National Cemetery, Sheehan saw some of the leading hawks and leading doves of the time seated side by side, men who were hardly speaking to each other by 1972, so fierce was the animosity engendered by the war. In a pew with the family sat Vann's friend Daniel Ellsberg, who had furnished Sheehan with the Pentagon Papers. Leading the pallbearers was Gen. William Westmoreland. Reporters who had relied on Vann for their negative accounts of the war gazed at generals who regarded them as traitors to the nation.

For Sheehan, the scene in the chapel was a fitting metaphor for the poison that Vietnam had injected into the American system; and he decided, almost instantly, to write the story of John Paul Vann. It was a brilliant idea. Vann's life and death turned out to be an even better story than Sheehan knew, as he listened to the eulogy of the man who had done more than anyone else to shape his own understanding of the war. After nearly 16 years of research and

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writing, Sheehan has produced a book of vast ambition and scope that tells the entire story of the American tragedy in Vietnam through Vann's life and death. Sheehan's claim for Vann—that he was "the one compelling figure" of the war, who had "come to personify the American endeavor in Vietnam"—may seem large to those who have never heard of him. But having known and worked with Vann in Vietnam in the mid-1960s, I share his view. Vann was certainly the most remarkable American that I saw in action.

A Bright Shining Lie is also, in a sense, Sheehan's own memoir. He grew up professionally in Vietnam, reporting things exactly as he saw them, only to find himself unexpectedly attacked by the most senior members of the U.S. government for betraying his country. But he considered himself a patriot who was telling the truth. In a revealing passage, Sheehan observes that he and his colleagues "shared the advisers' sense of commitment to this war. Our ideological prism and cultural biases were in no way different. We regarded the conflict as our war too."

IN THE early part of his remarkably rich, sometimes overly detailed study, Sheehan re-creates, as well as it has ever been done, the early days of what might be called the advisory war in Vietnam. This period, roughly 1961 to the beginning of 1965, has received far less attention than the period that followed, when American combat troops entered the war and the bombing of North Vietnam began. Yet it was then, in the early '60s, and there, in the rice paddies of the Mekong Delta and in the unsuccessful effort to energize the South Vietnamese government, that American policy failed first, by overestimating our Saigon allies and underestimating the Communists. Had the advisory war succeeded, as the Kennedy administration expected it would, the matter of the bombing of the North, and the deployment of American infantrymen in the South, would never have arisen. Lyndon Johnson's escalation of 1965 was, in reality, a thinly camouflaged admission that the advisory war had been lost.

Prior to 1965, Washington's policy in Vietnam was founded on a system of assigning American military advisers to South Vietnamese units. These men were without command authority over the troops. The adviser's job was literal-

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ly to advise—that is, to inspire, to suggest, to teach—his Vietnamese military counterpart on how to fight. But many advisers, while sincere and brave, had little or no understanding of the nature of a guerrilla war. During that early period, Vann was the most brilliant American adviser in Vietnam. He was fearless, and he understood the courage and the skill of the enemy, whom he came to respect more than America's allies in Saigon.

Vann had already become controversial when, on January 2, 1963, units of the South Vietnamese division that he was advising encountered elements of the 261st Main Force Viet Cong Battalion and the 514th Viet Cong Regiment near the Mekong Delta hamlet of Bac. Fewer than 40 Americans had died in Vietnam at that point. Vietnam still seemed relatively safe, an exciting opportunity, as Sheehan recalls, for "older men hoping to retrieve the excitement of wars past . . . [and] younger men . . . eager to prove themselves worthy of their first." That began to change at Bac. In one five-minute period, Viet Cong guns brought down four helicopters. Americans died in withering fire from a newly emboldened enemy who, for the first time, stood and fought a pitched battle. And when Vann thought the Viet Cong were trapped, his South Vietnamese counterpart, the division commander, allowed the enemy to slip out through an opening in the trap that he deliberately refused to close. It appeared that the South Vietnamese commander was afraid to risk politically unacceptable losses in combat.

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CONOR CRUISE O'BRIEN

Catherine Ursillo

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THE BATTLE OF BAC (or Ap Bac, as it is usually called) sent shock waves through Saigon and Washington. But its most enduring reverberations were among the handful of young reporters covering the conflict. Until Bac, Vann had always held back his passion and his anger when he talked to journalists. Now, standing in the rice paddies surrounded by the debris of battle, "the redness of the rage in his face merging into the redness of the sunburn on his neck," Vann exposed the depths of his rage to Sheehan, to David Halberstam, and to two or three other stunned colleagues. The South Vietnamese army stunk, he told them bitterly. It was corrupt from top to bottom, and the U.S. Command, moreover, was covering all this up, instead of coming to grips with it. The reporters came away with a story, of course. But more important, they came away with a cause. As a result of their reporting from Bac (reporting far more accurate than the official version of events that was forwarded by the American command in Saigon to President Kennedy, over Vann's frantic and furious objections), they were pilloried as traitors by the military, and by some older reporters, like Joseph Alsop, who were not there. The "credibility gap" was born.

For Halberstam and Sheehan, Vann became a heroic figure after Bac. He came to symbolize, in Sheehan's words, a commitment the journalists then shared, both to tell the truth *and* to win the war: "We believed in what our government said it was trying to accomplish in Vietnam, and we wanted our country to win this war just as passionately as Vann and his captains did." When Vann's tour of duty ended in 1963 and he returned to Washington, Halberstam wrote a powerful and influential profile of Vann for *Esquire*. I still remember the effect the article had on me, and on other young officers at the American Embassy in Saigon. Vann had grasped the nature of the war, he had tried to report it accurately to his superiors. Then, moments before he was scheduled to present his views to the Joint Chiefs of Staff, his briefing was canceled by those who were offended by Vann's fierce candor and

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criticism of his superiors in Saigon. In protest Vann resigned from the Army that had been his life.

Sheehan accurately recaptures the way we viewed Vann then: "Vann's moral heroism became the core of his legend." Vann, Sheehan recalls,

> emerged as the one authentic hero of this shameful period of moral and intellectual squalor. . . . The memory of Vann's moral heroism was the foundation of his reputation in later years in Vietnam for candor and willingness to grasp the brambles of fact however they might hurt. Even though he always drew back from condemning the war itself, this reputation for truth-telling lent credibility to what he had to say about the war to those who might differ with him on the fundamental issue of whether the United States ought to be waging war at all. The memory was in the chapel the day he was buried at Arlington. His old professional enemies and friends like Ellsberg who had since come to oppose his war—all paid homage to a moral hero who had given up what he loved most, the Army, rather than be a party to lies and delusions.

WHEN YOU work closely with a man, particularly under pressure, you think you know him, his values, his character, his background. It turns out, however, that those of us who worked closely with John Vann did not really know him at all. There were important facts of his life about which he kept us all in the dark. Sheehan has uncovered those facts, and another John Vann. The facts do not vitiate, certainly, our impression of Vann's energy, of his courage, of his shrewd understanding of how to fight a war against a guerrilla enemy. But they do change our understanding of what impelled him, of what made him run. Halberstam's hero turns out to have been more complicated and less candid than we all thought. It is one of Sheehan's achievements in this book to have uncovered the truth about Vann, and to have told it scrupulously, without easy moralizing.

As Sheehan discovered, the facts about Vann's performance in Vietnam *were* accurate. Vann did have great courage. The briefing for the Joint Chiefs of Staff had been canceled (as Halberstam had written) just as Vann was approaching the briefing room. But Sheehan also discovered that the insult of that day was not why Vann left his beloved Army:

> He [had] lied to Halberstam and manipulated him. . . . He had deceived everyone in

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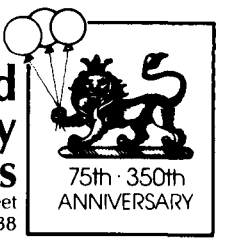

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Vietnam. We had interpreted his career recklessness as moral heroism and had worried about our stories hurting him because we had thought that he was sacrificing a general's stars. He had wanted us to think this. . . . [Yet] all the time he was deceiving us, he knew that he had no career to ruin and no stars to throw away. . . . He also said more about himself than he meant to say when he told the Army historian: "We had also, to all the visitors who came over there, been one of the bright shining lies."

John Paul Vann had two secrets. One was a shame about which he could do nothing; the other was a scandal that almost certainly ended his military career.

Vann was born illegitimate, Sheehan writes, the son of a woman of staggering selfishness and lack of moral fiber. To keep herself in fine clothes and furs, regardless of what happened to her family, she sold herself to men, some regular customers, some passers-by. Vann's real father, a womanizer named John Spry, played no significant role in his life; the man who bore the name that Vann finally chose was a friendly, complaisant sort who offered little to the boy he eventually adopted. Vann's unhappy childhood was not the reason, of course, for his difficulties in the Army; but it did create in the young man, according to Sheehan, a hostility to women, mixed feelings about honesty, a need for self-promotion, which would shape his later actions.

Despite (or because of) these early circumstances, the driven Vann set out to make a name for himself. He was smart (very smart, as I remember him), and the Army, one of the most egalitarian institutions in American society in the 1950s and '60s, offered a perfect way out for the angry redneck from Virginia. Vann entered the Army in the early '50s, and began a career rich in early promise.

Not that he was unwilling to embroider the facts. In Korea, where he served with distinction and bravery, showing a recklessness under fire that was always to be a part of his behavior, Vann won no important decorations. To make up for this bureaucratic failure, and as an important part of the past he was determined to invent for himself, he appropriated, 12 years later, the heroism of someone else: Ralph Puckett Jr., a young lieutenant and a friend of Vann's. Vann heard Puckett's story while assembling the dossier on the incident for Puckett's Distinguished Service Cross citation. It became an important part of Vann's Vietnam credentials. Writing to President-elect Nixon, for example, in 1969, in order to promote his ideas of how to win the war, he began with a little personal history: "On the night of 26 November 1950, I commanded a Ranger company which took the brunt of the opening Chinese campaign in the Korean War. . . . Myself and 15 men, most of them wounded, were all that were left when the sixth human-wave attack ran through us . . ." This was a lie. Vann never commanded any Ranger company in Korea. The company commander, of course, had been Vann's friend Puckett, who had been wounded and retired from the service.

But the great secret in Vann's life—the fulcrum of Sheehan's book—was an incident that ended Vann's hopes for the rank of a general officer. Vann had always been sexually voracious and indiscriminate, and over time had made clear to his wife that he would not reform. (She did not insist on a divorce until the late 1960s.) Sheehan concludes that using women "to give himself fleeting assurance was . . . not enough for him. He had to victimize women too, as he was victimizing [his wife] Mary Jane in a kind of revenge on his mother." In May 1959 Vann was called in for questioning by the Criminal Investigation Division of the Military Police after being accused of the statutory rape of a 15-year-old girl at Fort Leavenworth earlier that year. If found guilty, Vann faced up to 15 years in military prison. If acquitted, his military career would be finished, and decent employment in the private sector uncertain, unless the charges could be dropped and the incident expunged from the record.

This Vann accomplished in a characteristically remarkable way. With his wife's support, he constructed a fabric of lies to exonerate himself. Unconvinced, the CID challenged him to take a lie-detector test to disprove the girl's story. After Mary Jane gave her carefully rehearsed, sworn testimony in defense of her husband (she knew the truth, of course), Vann volunteered to take the lie-detector test. He had spent the summer studying polygraph machines, tested himself against sample questions, measured his own pulse rate as he practiced. And he succeeded in fooling the machine. It was his greatest deception. The investigating officer recommended that charges be dropped.

Still, Vann knew that his career had peaked. The official record would never show that the incident had even taken place, but it would be known among the elite promotion panels that select generals. Vann would be able to stay in the Army, but his dreams of stars were done. He brought this knowledge with him to Vietnam. But Sheehan, Halberstam, and the rest of us knew nothing of it.

AFTER VANN resigned from the Army, I joined with a few other people in the U.S. Embassy who admired Vann, including Frank Wisner, a fellow Foreign Service officer assigned to the same office (now the American ambassador to Egypt), to find a way to bring him back to Vietnam as a civilian. It turned out that the only way to get him back, over the objections of Ambassador Maxwell Taylor, General Westmoreland, and other officers who thought that Vann was a dangerous

ELEGY

He went without a cry or a kick,
a blink or a hic. From one sleep, he
slipped into another. Gently
he turned in his fluid existence
until the liquid globe became his
singular struggle and he shifted

the great weight of being. Thus, he was
free from all lessons, languages, and
love. By being less than five hundred
grams of unborn dreams, he escaped
each legislation. Missing even
the morgue, he lay in a bucket where

he was cradled in his circular
fate. To a brain with a microscope,
he donated his bean-sized kidneys;
match sticks of bone marrow he bequeathed
to the soul of science. He gave new
flesh to fire and softened the ashes

with innocence. A frenzy of white
spirits, flocking like gulls, gathered
his ghost. He was so unassuming
doing his dervish of life and death,
so lusty in his liberation
so lost to reconciliation.

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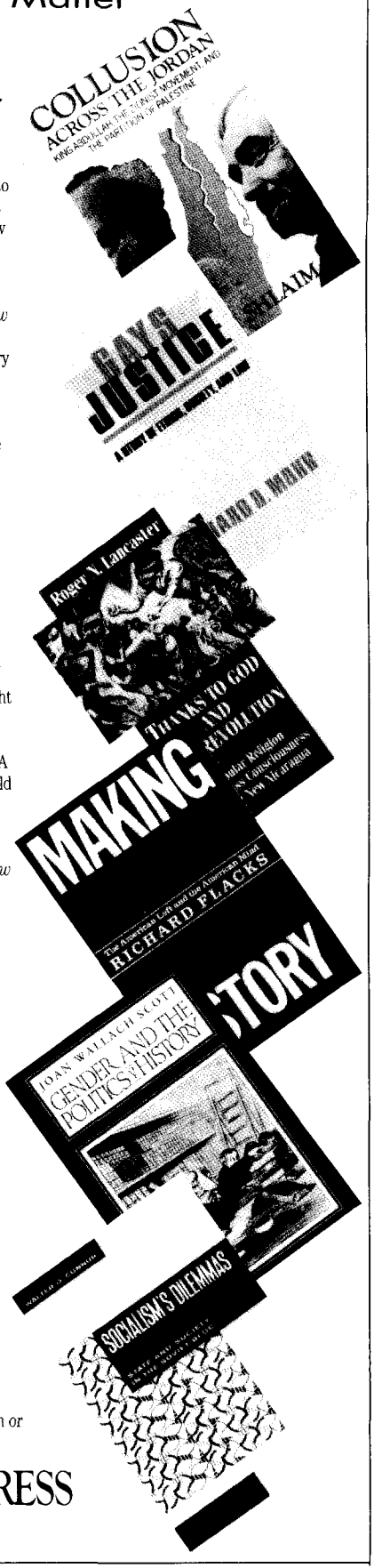

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renegade who leaked to the press, was as a provincial representative in one of the most dangerous provinces in the country, Hau Nghia, just to the west of Saigon. In March 1965 Vann took the job, a substantial demotion; it was a way back to the war, and he was very much on probation in the eyes of his superiors. But soon Vann became such an indispensable figure that, despite several serious altercations with American military commanders, he eventually maneuvered himself into a job without precedent in American military history. As a *civilian*, Vann was placed in charge of all Americans, including the military, in an entire Military Corps area. This meant that Vann, not in uniform, effectively commanded American troops (through a military deputy who took orders from him).

But sometime during this phase, sometime in the early '70s, Sheehan recounts, Vann "lost his compass." Some of Vann's defenders may disagree with Sheehan on this critical point, but it would appear that Vann gradually came to see the war in Vietnam as his own war, as a personal war. In his desire to win, he began to infringe on his integrity in the one area of his life in which he had steadfastly maintained it. "He had always kept professional truth in a separate compartment of his life," Sheehan writes. "[Personal] deceptions had never affected his professional integrity.... Vann had invested so much of John Vann in the war that he had talked himself into believing he had to be winning.... The war satisfied him so completely that he could no longer look at it as something separate from himself."

NEAR THE END, Vann became something quite different from the man of Bac. He became a little like Francis Coppola's Kurtz, so seized was he with the drama of single-handedly stemming the tide. Kurtz, however, was frozen in his madness. Vann was diabolically active in the field. Larry Stern, the *Washington Post* reporter, told me, after he returned from a trip to Vietnam just before Vann's death, that I would no longer recognize Vann. He had become a war lover. Once concerned about the use of excessive firepower, he now called constantly for more and more of it. To be sure, Vann was now facing a different enemy. No longer was this a war between local guerrillas and South Vietnamese soldiers; it was now a "main force" war between North Vietnamese regulars, using tanks and artillery, and combined American and South Vietnamese forces, who were sometimes surrounded or outnumbered. But Vann's zeal was more than a matter of strategy, more than his typical recklessness under fire. He had changed. Sheehan reports that Vann circled the smoking craters made by B-52s immediately after the big bombers had flown past and fired his own M-16 at any dazed survivors. The man who had once objected violently to the stupidity of random "free fire zones" was now referred to as "Mr. B-52" by his Vietnamese counterparts.

By the very end, Vann was a man possessed. The risks he had always taken now reached lunatic levels. He was madly challenging the odds. He staked his career on his prediction that the 1972 Easter Offensive, timed by the North Vietnamese to improve their position in the secret talks being conducted by Henry Kissinger in Paris, would be beaten back. By the smallest of margins, Vann succeeded in stopping the North Vietnamese before they took Kontum. It was there that he died.

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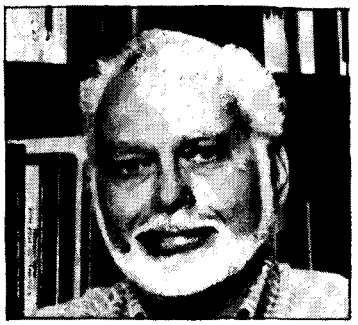

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Hanoi proudly proclaimed that its gunners had shot him down. In truth, his pilot had flown their chopper into a clump of trees. The hero of battle died in an accident.

JOHN PAUL VANN'S brilliance always masked a significant fallacy in his thinking. Vann and I argued about it from time to time in the '60s; Sheehan alludes to it. In Vann's view of the war, it was the task of the Americans to run the entire show, to bypass the hopelessly corrupt Vietnamese government and its chain of command. This would have required many men of Vann's commitment and skills to be even remotely plausible as a policy. It would have required a complete transformation of "advisers" into commanders of Vietnamese, which Saigon would not have accepted. Vann could not recognize that there would never be enough Americans like him in Vietnam, and that, even if there were, they could not stay there forever, nor take the place of the indigenous government. Finally Vann did not understand (and neither did the highest levels of the American government) that even if "pacification"—the policy of assisting Saigon to gain control over the rural population—had succeeded, North Vietnam was always ready to send its regulars south to achieve its objective; and if it did so, or rather, when it did so, the war would become too costly for the United States to sustain.

Sheehan's sprawling portrait of Vann covers all this, and much more. There is a blizzard of detail. Sometimes he gives the reader more than is necessary: 60 pages on the history of Vietnam and America in Asia over several centuries, for example, which slow the drama down without adding much. But the cumulative impact of Sheehan's labors is still powerful, and often dazzling. When Sheehan writes about things that he witnessed himself—Ap Bac, for example—his rage at the stupidity of some of the commanding generals in Vietnam, and more generally at the failure of American policy in Vietnam, is undiminished by the decades that have passed.

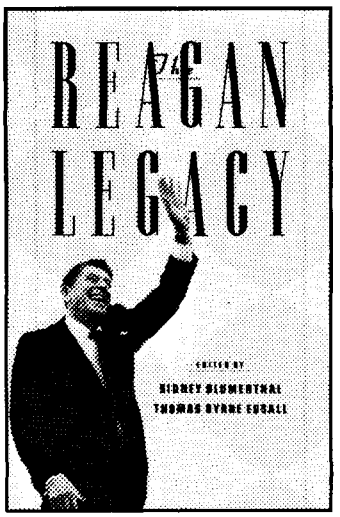
As told by Sheehan, Vann's life is obviously meant to mirror the American experience in Vietnam; and the corruption of America by the war is supposed to seem symbolized by Vann's secret life. But wisely Sheehan himself never makes this grander theme explicit. Sheehan has recovered from the ruins of Vietnam a heroic and tragic American. And for the purpose of explaining what the war was like, he has chosen exactly the right subject. The figure of Vann moves our attention to the proper level, to the senior field personnel of the war, on whom fell the true burden of the inept policy that was devised at higher levels. Far too little has been made of their experience of Vietnam.

Their experience was, among other things, thankless. At John Vann's funeral, I found myself seated immediately behind William P. Rogers, the secretary of state, and Melvin Laird, the secretary of defense. As the pallbearers filed in, Rogers, whose presence in the chapel was evidently owed to the advice of his staff, leaned over to Laird and whispered, "Who was this guy, anyway?"

RICHARD HOLBROOKE

Richard Holbrooke served in Vietnam (1963-66) with the U.S. Embassy and AID, and was a member of the delegation at the Paris Peace Talks (1968-69). He is a managing director at Shearson Lehman Hutton, Inc.

The Reagan years—



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Eyewitness to History
edited by John Carey

(Harvard University Press, 706 pp., $24.95)

Just what is this book? When it was published in England by Faber and Faber, its title was *The Faber Book of Reportage*, an unpretentious, factual description of its contents. Now that it has reached America and has been published by the Harvard University Press, it has put on airs, and calls itself *Eyewitness to History*, as if it should be taken seriously as a contribution to our understanding of the past.

It is composed of 300 short descriptions, mostly by eyewitnesses, of dramatic events over the last 2,000 years. The principle behind the compilation, according to its editor, John Carey, is that "eyewitness evidence . . . makes for authenticity," whereas "reconstituted history . . . is laborious and dead." In selecting the material, a premium is put on "the qualities of writing and observation displayed," rather than on the question whether the subject matter is "of major historical interest." "The book is (and is meant to be) full of unusual or indecorous or incidental images." Carey frankly admits that what he is offering is "history deprived of generalizations."

If we accept all this at face value, it is at once obvious that something has gone badly wrong. In the first place, thanks in large part to questions coming out of the discipline of literature in which Carey was trained, we historians are only too well aware that Truth is about as easy to find as a Unicorn. Texts are studied and restudied for their multiple alternative meanings and their underlying subtexts. It is recognized that contemporary preoccupations, modes of thought, and systems of values distort the very structure of reportage and narrative, and determine what is put in and what is left out. Mysterious codes, signs, and symbols abound, if one knows how to look for them with the eyes of the symbolic anthropologist. History has long since ceased to be easy.

Even if we agree to ignore these troubling textual problems, however, there are other sound reasons why the book cannot be regarded as a contribution to history. The 300 extracts are crammed into 706 pages, which means that each one averages only about two pages—some more and some less. To a generation accustomed to the news on television, this fragmentation may seem perfectly natural. But a moment's reflection shows that stories compressed into such tiny snippets are not natural at all. They are inevitably ripped out of their wider context and thus deprived of their historical significance. They may inspire emotions of horror or excitement, but they cannot expand empathy with, or improve understanding of, the past. This is especially so since Carey only has room to offer his readers between none and five lines of explanation for each snippet. In this brief space he cannot possibly explain who the authors were, how much they actually saw, and what were their backgrounds, their biases, and their values. Nor can he set the events themselves in their proper context.

Let me give a concrete example. An English journalist's account of the massacre in the Palestinian refugee camp at Shatila near Beirut in September 1982 is prefaced by the following, uncharacteristically lengthy, introduction: "Israeli forces had invaded Southern Lebanon on 6 June, and the PLO forces were evacuated to Syria at the end of August under American supervision. The Israelis then gave the Lebanese militia the run of the Palestinian refugee camps at Sabra and Shatila. Major Haddad was a cashiered Lebanese army officer." Can anyone, pro-Arab, pro-Christian, or pro-Israeli, seriously regard that as an adequate explanation of an immensely complicated event? What Carey gives us is the immediacy of the reportage about the corpses in the streets.

Since his book set out to be a *Book of Reportage*, the principle upon which Carey quite rightly based his choice was that the narratives be "vivid" and convey "authenticity." Vividness is indeed a historical virtue. Fine writing is certainly to be admired. For reporters, who are primarily concerned with conveying the surface of events, describing in words what is now often better conveyed on a TV screen, vividness is all, or rather almost all. Even in this profession, howev-

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er, vividness alone is not enough. The reporters who win Pulitzer Prizes not only write well, they also (many of them) probe beneath the surface of events to explain them and to put them in context.

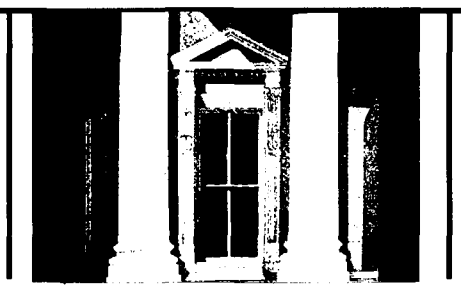
It is certainly true that in the ancient world vividness was thought to be evidence of truth. When Polybius wanted to praise Homer for his historical accuracy, he pointed to the fact that the aim of his poetry was "vividness." Credibility was thought to depend upon a command of realistic-seeming detail, as if the narrator had been an eyewitness. But this ancient mode of conveying an assurance of reliability was displaced at the Renaissance by the idea that historical truth depends primarily on factual evidence drawn from solidly based record materials or oral sources. The vivid but fictitious orations so dear to Thucydides were henceforth relegated to the historical novelists. Today we read him not for his skills as a reporter, but for his analytical reflections on war and morality, and their effects on the rise and fall of empire.

CAREY'S CHOICE of contents raises other disturbing questions. Most of the extracts are about British, or British-witnessed, events, half of which occurred after 1910, so that the title is misleading. More serious still, the extracts cater, in all but one respect, to the most elementary levels of human curiosity. As all editors of popular newspapers, TV anchormen, and other seekers after a mass audience know only too well, what turns on the public are stories about atrocities, war, violence, murder, natural disasters, wonders, grotesques, the peculiar customs of other people—and sex. Carey's collection of reportage is as remarkable for its almost obsessive preoccupation with cruelty and death as it is for its near total absence of sex (the only exception being Flaubert's deadpan account of the fun and games he enjoyed with some Egyptian dancing girls one night in Egypt in 1850).

By far the largest single category of extracts is that devoted to the horrors of war. Ten snippets take care of the wars from the fourth century B.C. to the late 18th century. The Napoleonic wars rate 18, the Crimean War one, the Indian Mutiny three, the American Civil War four, the Boer War one. The First World War rates 19, the Spanish Civil War four, and the Second World War no fewer than 44. The Korean War rates three, and the Vietnam War four. In one way or another, descriptions of suffering and death in war, nearly all in the last 200 years, account for over a third of the contents of *Eyewitness to History*.

In addition, there are descriptions of unrelated or related atrocities, from those committed by the Spanish in the West Indies and Paraguay in the 16th century; through the tortures of English Protestants by the Spanish Inquisition and of Catholics by the English in the Tower of London; down through the cruelty of the Great Moghul in 1618; to the miserable life of a French galley slave in the 18th century; to the Black Hole of Calcutta in 1756; to the ferocious flogging of a female slave in New Orleans in 1841; to the massacre at Cawnpore and the British revenge during the Indian Mutiny in 1857; to the Turkish atrocities in Bulgaria in 1876 (which so upset Gladstone). Atrocity stories continue relentlessly through horrific descriptions of life and death in Nazi camps at Auschwitz, Dachau, Maideneck, Birkenau, and Belsen, to scenes at Hiroshima and Nagasaki after the atom bombing, and conclude with the massacre at Shatila.

Carey loves murders and executions, almost as much as larger atrocities: the stabbings of Thomas Becket in 1170 and



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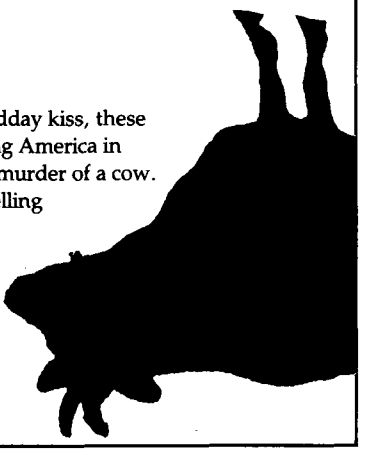

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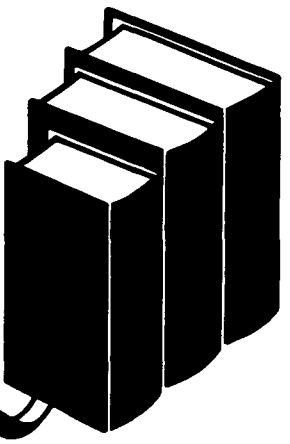

the Duke of Buckingham in 1628; the burning of Thomas Cranmer in 1556; the decapitation of Mary Queen of Scots in 1586; the shooting of Abraham Lincoln in 1865; the guillotining of Louis XVI in 1793, of a criminal in Rome in 1845, and of the mass murderer Landru in 1922; an execution by impalement at Latakia in 1813; the shooting of Mata Hari in 1917 and of Czar Nicholas II of Russia and his family in 1918; the hanging of Nazi war criminals in 1946; and finally the slow stoning to death of a woman in Jeddah in 1959. Carey also likes stories about the results of plagues and famines: the Black Death in 1348; the English-induced genocide by famine in Ireland in 1602; death by scurvy in 1741, and by cholera in 1832; the Irish potato famine in 1847, and the famine in Russia in 1921. Even when Carey turns to sport, his emphasis is all on brutality and death, body-line bowling at cricket, or the grisly killing of a rabbit.

To break the tedium of these tales of horror, Carey slips in those tidbits that have been the staple of popular reading ever since the printing press and mass literacy first spread in the 16th century. Known in France as *"faits divers,"* they here include tall tales about some green children in Suffolk in 1170, a salamander in Italy in 1505, and a mermaid in Newfoundland in 1610. There are accounts of real wonders such as Kubla Khan's park in 1275; a performing ass in Cairo in 1516; the Inca's Golden Garden in 1530; and Babylon in 1583. There are brief notices of children killing themselves by falling into wells or off roofs in the 14th century; bull-baiting in London in 1710, and bull-fighting in Spain in 1957; the messy cremation of Shelley in 1822, and three accounts of the sinking of the Titanic. The only connecting link between these events is the strict chronological order in which they are presented.

WHAT IS the reader supposed to make of it all? Assuming that this is, indeed, "eyewitness to history," what conclusions is he supposed to draw about the past and the present? The most obvious one is that history is, above all else, the record of man's inhumanity to man. Now this is certainly part of the story of mankind, even a large part, but it is not the whole. There is the grandeur and the glory and the tragedy of the rise and fall of civilizations, the development and decay of rich cultures and religious cosmologies, to say nothing of the mastery of the material world thanks to the advance-

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ment of science, none of which can be treated in two pages of vivid reportage. Even if we stick to Carey's preoccupations with the trivial and the sensational, there has been some compassion in the world as well as cruelty, tenderness as well as torture, feast as well as famine, saving as well as killing. In a word, there is life as well as death, beauty as well as horror. There is even, here and there, although rarely among the holders of power, evidence of a moral conscience at work.

It would seem that Carey intended his book to be no more than an entertaining collection of examples of vivid reportage through the ages, a genre of compilation very popular in Britain. His American publisher then gave it what was hoped to be relevance by substituting a catchy title that made it sound like a contribution to history. But the new title, and the tilt in significance it has given to the book, was adumbrated in the first place by some ideas Carey puts forward in his introduction.

Not only does Carey believe that "the advent of mass communications represents the greatest change in human consciousness that has taken place in recorded history." He also claims that mass communications is "the natural successor to religion," which he thinks explains why both are so much concerned with death. This astonishing idea is derived from the theory that religion was merely "the permanent backdrop" to premodern man's existence, just "as reportage is for his modern counterpart." Reportage, Carey argues, has replaced the role of religion in opening man's vision to events beyond his immediate horizon, providing a release from his trivial routines, and giving "a habitual daily illusion of communication with a reality greater than himself."

Just what is the nature of this reality, which has been replaced by mass communications, Carey tactfully fails to elucidate. He regards his book as a contribution to this change in human consciousness, which is presumably why there is no mention of religion, except for descriptions of the torture and burning of Christian heretics, suttee among Brahmans, and circumcision among Jews. Carey also seems to think that reportage is a modern substitute for literature. The notion that there is something extraordinary about great works of literature, from Homer to Shakespeare to Márquez, merely "reflects a wish to promote the imaginary above the real." He argues that the elevation of the former on a cultural pedestal is a product of "resentment of the masses," a snobbish condemnation of low culture as "vulgar," and "a residue of magical thinking."

John Carey holds the Merton Chair of English at Oxford University. His crude denigration of religion, high culture, and literature must make his predecessors in that distinguished position turn in their graves. Not only is he spouting trendy populist nonsense about the subject matter of their (and his) discipline, he is also demeaning the discipline of history. Carey must be given full praise for assembling a truly remarkable collection of examples of vivid reportage. He also has the dubious credit of being the first to reduce the presentation of historical events to the equivalent of the 30-second TV spot, that ultimate product of mindless mass communications in the 20th century.

LAWRENCE STONE

Lawrence Stone is Dodge Professor of History and director of the Shelby Cullom Davis Center for Historical Studies at Princeton University. His most recent book is *The Past and the Present Revisited* (Routledge and Kegan Paul).

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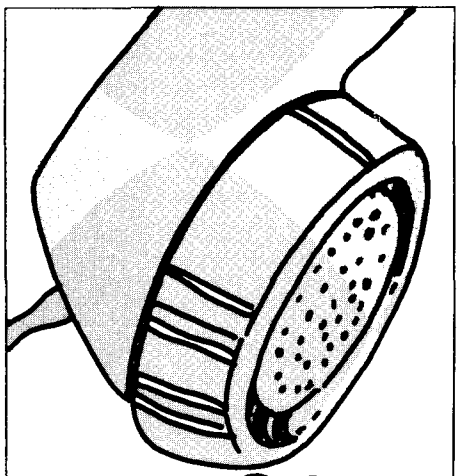

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Drawing To A Close

Paris Without End: On French Art Since World War I
by Jed Perl

(North Point Press, 147 pp., $19.95)

The title of Jed Perl's collection of essays on members of the School of Paris is a tribute to the subject of one of them, Alberto Giacometti, whose book, *Paris sans fin*, was published posthumously in 1969. *Paris sans fin* is composed of a rhapsodic text by the artist, and 150 crayon drawings, transferred to lithographic stone. *Sans fin* indeed: the 150 drawings are a fraction of the full Parisian suite. And Paris indeed was endless in the sense that it is but an external fact that there are 150 drawings: the suite could have gone on and on, *sans fin*.

Giacometti appears to have seized upon whatever struck his eye, whatever happened to be there—a scratchy tree, a nude model, a lamppost, a corner of the famous strewn studio on the rue Hippolyte-Mindron, some mounted animal skeletons, parked cars on an anonymous street, a distant dome, the Pont Alexandre III, even the Eiffel Tower—aspects and fragments of the dear world he was about to leave, urgently transcribed perhaps in the knowledge that he was leaving it, and as if he had to get as much down as he could, as a kind of graphic testament, before he did so. There is the common form of death, where one leaves behind all the marvelous bits and pieces of a world that goes on and on *sans fin* though we are no longer there. But there is another form of death, when you remain but the world goes, to be replaced by another in the life of which one is an outsider. The Paris of *Paris sans fin*, and certainly the Paris of the School of Paris, is in this latter sense a world gone dead. Jed Perl writes as an elegiast of something shimmering and irrecoverable.

But since that world has gone, the title collides against the powerful cadences of the Book of Common Prayer: "As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be: world without end. Amen," which gives another sense of endlessness—that of eternity. And perhaps Giacometti's Paris, like the Paris of Matisse and Picasso and Derain, exists in two temporal dimensions—a part of history we can know about only through evidence and testimonials such as *Paris sans fin*; and outside history, like the Platonic Form of a way of life, a mode of civilization, a criterion against which to measure the shortfalls and the fitful successes of the present. More interesting in many ways than what he writes is the posture from which Perl addresses his subject: Paris as something that has ended, and as something endless because ideal. Writing of Balthus, he says, "Parisian art must have signified . . . the perfection of sensibility: the ultimate transformation of feeling into paint." Parisian art must signify that to him as well, but unlike Balthus, he is living in an artworld revealed as flawed against that image of that perfection.

But Perl also writes this way: "One continues to hear, as late as the 1950s, of the revelations Paris can provide . . . one could still meet Brancusi and Giacometti, and study with Leger, while scraping along on almost nothing." In the 1950s time and eternity intersected, one might say, and it was still possible to live the life of Paris as an ideal form. One could still converse with artists and writers who defined the ideal, with the sense that there would be others to take their place, and that Paris would continue to exist on two levels at once, like Rome and the City of God—*sans fin* in both senses. And then at some point it stopped having a present.

I was one who got to know Giacometti, whose pals studied with Leger, who scraped by on almost nothing—and for whom, at a certain moment, Paris just became a past, a place where people went to eat well if they could afford it, and New York became the only present with a future. And perhaps because of the excitement in seeing that future being made, Paris even stopped being an ideal, just because, somehow "the perfection of sensibility" stopped representing an aspiration for art. And here is Jed Perl, a young critic, writing in New York of that vanished Parisian present under an ideal that is still vivid for him. And one wants to know what it says about the world today that a sensitive young art writer should turn back to Paris in its golden moment as if it implied an imperative.

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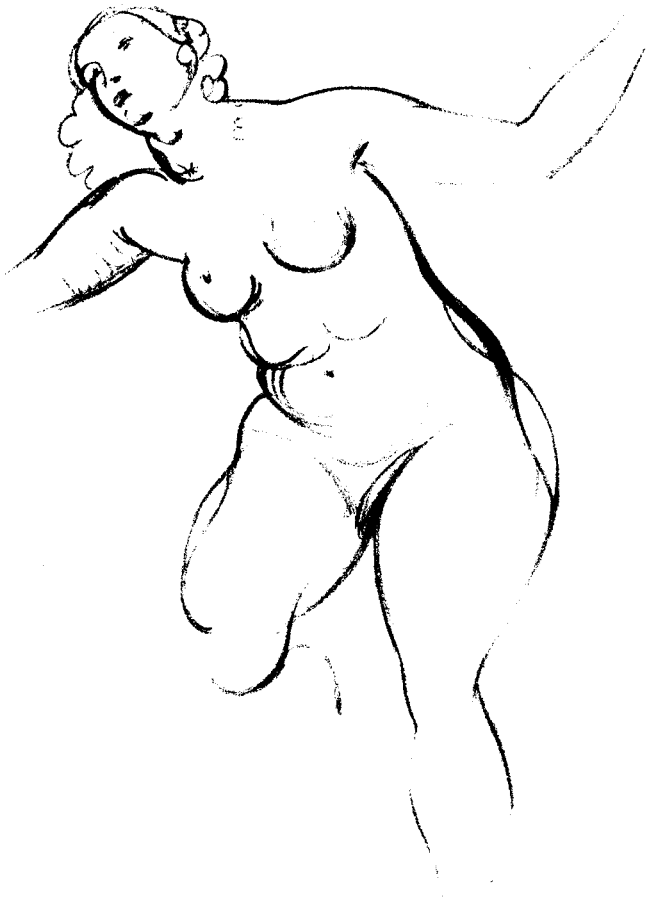
Perl has a mind more ruminative than reflective, and he comes through these 11 essays more as the transcriber of feelings than of thoughts. In a way, his style as a writer corresponds to that of the extraordinary work whose title he has adopted for his own. The individual essays are *sans fin* in the respect that though they end, they do not *come* to an end. Each, like Giacometti's Paris, is a sequence of observations, of some facts he has nosed out, of vignettes and anecdotes, setting one foot in front of another, with a lot of pauses and pointings, and some passages of soft moralizing; and reading through a given essay is like what taking a walk with Giacometti might have been, ambling, stopping as the artist took out his crayons, drew your attention to something often quite ordinary, perhaps because of its ordinariness. Perl's pieces are little expeditions, meandering through a body of work, or a particular exhibition, like the one in 1984 of Matisse's work from Nice in the 1920s that everyone had written off, or of the shockingly randy works of Picasso's last decade, also until then written off. The essays are as satisfying and as unsatisfying as such promenades can of their very nature be. There are no flashes, no dazzling interpretations or penetrating insights or stunning explanations. In compensation, Perl is one for whom the artist he writes about is like a landscape he seeks to make his own.

Of *Paris sans fin*, Perl writes: "The artist doesn't invent anything. He apparently has no overriding idea." "*Hypotheses non fingo*," Isaac Newton declared, disclaiming the invention of any ideas or the possession of any overriding one. Newton once depicted himself as stumbling along the shore of a boundless ocean—the ocean *sans fin*—picking up, like a child, a few scattered shells. Giacometti ambled the rue d'Alysia in just that way, drawing a few objects from among the endless many. ("*Formidable cet arbre!*" one can almost hear him saying, as he strives to fix its essence in a few straggling lines.) Obviously, Perl is not in this class (who, after all, is?), but something of the same spirit animates the way he writes, feigning no hypotheses, inventing nothing.

Part of what I admire in Perl's book, too, is his dedication to faded artistic stars, as if their light were still important for us. Derain, one is certain, will someday be restored to eminence. But Dufy?



NUDE, BY ANDRÉ DERAIN

"Dufy's paintings, like the dark, shimmering canvases of Derain and Rouault, and the pellucid ones of Albert Marquet—are difficult to judge within the continuum of history, and so they tend to be viewed as historical curiosities." Leger? "He's a man to come back to when the wars are done and peace is over the land." Hélion? "Jean Hélion is one of the great artists for our time." What a shame there is no essay on Marquet or Rouault. Like *Paris sans fin*, it is an external fact, perhaps accidental circumstance, that there simply were no exhibitions of these in the period of these essays for Perl to ramble through, that he wrote only of those he happened to write about. His book is in no sense a *study* of the School of Paris.

There are, after all, theories of the history of modern art other than the canonical ones, where history leaps, like a viaduct, from island to island, and the islands that do not support a pier are not part of the march. But if one is to take on those readings of history, one has to venture some theory, to entertain an idea, and it is Perl's limit as a critic that he does not try this, just as, I feel, it was Giacometti's limit as an artist, even in *Paris sans fin*, that he had not solved the problem of drawing. Perl cites an episode from James Lord's biography of Giacometti in which the latter was drawing Matisse's portrait and the old master said, "Nobody knows how to draw.... You don't either. You'll never know how to draw."

I think we are living in an age in which, if I may raise Matisse's complaint to a level of metaphorical generality, nobody knows how to draw—an age in which art itself is a lost art. I think Perl feels this, and I think that explains his obsession with the School of Paris, when it was understood what art was, and that it had something to do with the perfection of sensibility. And indeed, one way of coping with an inhospitable present is to turn, like the hero in a story by Thomas Mann, to a bright past, walking through it as if it were a present.

I think I can mark the moments in recent art history when artists in New York saw in some of those painters a way out of their problems. "Part of the interest Dufy holds for certain painters today has to do with his involvement in the French luxury textile industry." (It was that involvement, indeed, that probably explains the Dufy exhibition in the first instance, since artists just then were interested in textile patterns and surfaces.) That moment is past. "The

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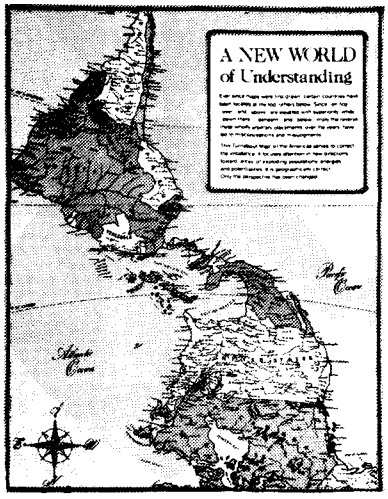

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Balthus retrospective of 1983-84 was an event that left many of us energized, optimistic." That moment too has past, and with it the energy and the optimism. By the end, a palpable melancholy has settled upon the pages of this book. Paris in one sense will never disappoint. But it also leads us nowhere. In a deep respect, nobody knows how to draw, and nobody knows what to think about this fact. This is a sad, generous, twilight book by a writer trapped between worlds.

ARTHUR C. DANTO

Arthur C. Danto is Johnsonian Professor of Philosophy at Columbia University.

WKGB

Split Signals: Television and Politics in the Soviet Union by Ellen Mickiewicz

(Oxford University Press, 286 pp., $22.95)

Just before his overthrow and the October Revolution, Nicholas II, a poor propagandist, declared that the cinema is "an empty matter which no one needs." Lenin, for his part, saw the movies in a largely illiterate country "as the most essential art," and after taking power he directed a film industry that acted as the Soviet Union's leading tool for spreading the Bolshevik gospel. Lenin was interested not so much in the high art that would emerge in the '20s—Eisenstein's *October* or Dovzhenko's *Arsenal*—but rather in agitprop classics like *Proletarians of the World Unite!* and Lev Kuleshov's comedy *The Extraordinary Adventures of Mr. West in the Land of the Bolsheviks*, in which a rich American cowboy learns the wonders of civilized life in Moscow.

Mikhail Gorbachev, pitchman for a self-described second "revolution," has discovered a much simpler, more embracing propaganda instrument: television. While the principal object of American television has been mass entertainment and commercial success, the Soviets have always regarded the television as a tool of ideological and linguistic assimilation. But until now the Soviets were never as successful at their game as CBS, NBC, or ABC have been at theirs. In the past, Soviet televisions were best known for their uncanny knack of catching fire and exploding. But usually it was a duller matter, just sitting there in the middle of the room, glassy and mesmerizing, a kind of electric aquarium.

Along came Gorbachev, who quickly proved himself a master video performer, better even than Ronald Reagan, and a consummate organizer of the medium. The publication of suppressed literary and historical works in the various newspapers and the "thick" journals still dominates the conversations of the Moscow intelligentsia. But among what Edmund Wilson once charitably described as "the potato-faced masses," the talk is of television.

The most popular show now in the Soviet Union, according to a poll in *Literaturnaya Gazeta*, is "View," a weekly late-night mix of rock videos, investigative journalism, and panel discussions. The three hosts are in their late 20s or early 30s; they shocked their audiences on their first show last year when they went on the air without neckties, jackets, or the customary pieties. They quickly began covering the whole syllabus of contemporary issues: the war in Afghanistan, corruption in Central Asia, food shortages, prisons. One afternoon I sat in on a story conference at the studio and watched incredulously as the staffers decided to cut a segment on the KGB. "Too dull," the producer said. And compared with what did go on the air that night, he was right.

The other day I was greeted at work by two office drivers hanging out in the hall, smoking foul Russian cigarettes and talking about male street prostitutes: it was the latest topic on the Leningrad station's "Six-Hundred Seconds." They could not get over an interview with a teenage pimp who described how many rubles he was making just by "rounding up" little boys and "putting them to work."

For Soviet viewers used to years of cynicism and astonishing banality, this

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type of program—and the range now available—is a kind of gift. It is almost impossible now to recall how boring Soviet television was before Gorbachev came to power. When it wasn't drubbing the viewer on the head with ideological bludgeon, it was, at once, saccharine and humiliating. "In Brezhnev's day," one Muscovite told me, "one of the most popular shows on the air was 'The Cinema Traveler's Club.' They would take their cameras all around the world and show you how lovely the streets in Paris were, how grand the art in Rome was, what the coffee was like in Colombia. And there I was in my rotten kitchen."

The evening news show "Vremya" ("Time"), which is shown at 9 o'clock on all the major Soviet stations and has the biggest audience of any program in the world, was a stultifying mix of heroic harvest reports and scathing reports on the foreign devil. "Vremya" defied the first rule of propaganda: that it must be believable. The soaring economic reports and crude descriptions of American life were at such odds with reality that "Vremya" lost credibility. But it was the only show in town.

Compare that with "Before and After Midnight," an acerbic talk program hosted by Volodya Molchanov and reminiscent of PBS circa 1969. Molchanov will have a prominent novelist on one night and a "sex expert" on the next. "Projector Perestroika," which follows "Vremya," focuses on a single topic, much like "Nightline." Recently they showed how air and water pollution is ruining Yasnaya Polyana. "Good Evening Moscow" is a televised version of American talk-radio, with a panel of officials or workers or intellectuals answering questions phoned in by the home audience. The cinema chat show "Kino-Panorama" is, compared with Siskel and Ebert, a video version of Bazin and Agee.

POLITICALLY, the effect has been superficially striking. Some of the West's most fearsome skeptics have come on trips to Moscow only to be won over by television. Richard Pipes, the hard-liner's hard-liner when he was in the Reagan administration, practically turned to goo when he switched on his television at the National Hotel and watched a documentary called "Cathedral," which first showed newsreels of churches being dynamited during the Stalin era and then cut to a young woman telling all who would listen that without faith in God "you are dead." On another channel Pipes watched the editor of the magazine *Ogonyok* question the Communist Party's control of the state. "I was stunned," Pipes said.

From the start, Gorbachev was keenly aware of television as an untapped resource. He understood that while most people loathed the turgid news program "Vremya," nearly 90 percent of the population considered it their main source of information. He knew as well that television was no longer a luxury item. While only a quarter of the population had a television set by the end of Khrushchev's reign, more than 97 percent were plugged in by the time Gorbachev became general secretary in March 1985. Even lonely *izbas* on the Siberian plain have antennae poking out of their roofs. People were watching; the question was what.

One of Gorbachev's first acts after taking power was to put Alexander Yakovlev, his chief propagandist and closest ideological ally, in charge of the mass media. As a student at Columbia University and an ambassador to Canada, Yakovlev had time to study talk shows, commercials, documentaries, and the other desiderata of Western television. He quickly cleared out much of the old guard at Ostankino, the sprawling site in North Moscow of the Soviet television industry. Yakovlev made sure that Ostankino's new administration was also in sync with Gorbachev. As he once said, "The TV image is everything."

With his sophisticated sense of occasion and the TV image, Gorbachev has been his own Michael Deaver. He is forever putting himself in positions where he can glow on the tube. Compared with his waxen predecessors, he is a natural star, gently, confidently explaining what will come next, and why, to his viewers. When Gorbachev travels to the provinces, the obliging evening news cameras are always sure to show him standing in a circle with local workers, intently, patiently discussing the area's problems. Simplifying his Russian so that the attendant Uzbeks or Yakuts will be sure to understand him, Gorbachev acts the role of the Great Friendly Father, telling them, "We must work in a new way!" And they agree. Over and over, they agree. At televised press conferences, too, Gorbachev is an increasingly fluid performer who has even learned to cut his remarks down to, if not sound bites, then at least single paragraphs.

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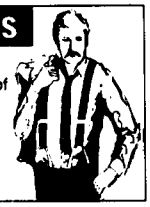

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Gorbachev's command performance—and a transforming moment in the history of Soviet television and propaganda—came at the special Communist Party Conference in June, the most extraordinary miniseries in the history of modern Russia. For the first time in the history of the country, the citizenry was privy to the business of their own governance. Every night for a week, television showed Party speakers, high and low, promise the transformation of the Soviet state. And when a speaker would begin to list his regions' accomplishments and lapse into the "old ways" of Party blather, the audience would heckle, and the speech never made it to the evening highlights.

In its way, the whole affair was worthy of Aaron Spelling. It had everything. There were elements of broad comedy, as a factory foreman offered to "shoot" useless bureaucrats; moments of cliffside danger, as one speaker suggested to the entire nation that Andrei Gromyko retire (as he just did); and moments of high drama, as Boris Yeltsin, the disgraced Moscow Party chief, pleaded for his rehabilitation, and Yegor Ligachev, Gorbachev's conservative lightning rod, rejected Yeltsin outright, and spoke up for the Party hacks. Watching the final night of the conference at my apartment, a friend, a Soviet engineer, clutched his temples as Ligachev struck back at Yeltsin, muttering, "Never before, never, never, and all of it on television!" Before the conference, Ligachev's conservatism was mainly a rumor among the urban intelligentsia. Now it is a matter of knowledge, of the record; there exists a clear image.

In the end it was Gorbachev himself who proved to be an artist of video leadership; that is, he came across as all things to all people. To the intelligentsia, he was the revolutionary leader; to the nerve-wracked Party faithful, he was the cautious reformer. Gorbachev used the occasion to propose a reordering of the Communist Party's relationship with the state's governing bodies, but more important, surely, was the video image he imprinted on the television audience. True or not, Gorbachev *appeared* to introduce real politics into public life. And in a country that spans 11 time zones, that contains countless languages and nationalities, he did it the only way possible: through television.

ELLEN MICKIEWICZ'S book provides a fascinating account of the transformations of technology and changes of programming in Soviet television, though her book suffers badly from the instant obsolescence that has frustrated so many other authors trying to capture a movement in motion. What she cites as the hot show in Moscow, "The Twelfth Floor," is already off the air. Mickiewicz also has little feel for the imagery of Soviet television, the look of what she rightly calls "the plan to reorient the psyche of a nation." She is more comfortable with demographics and statistical analysis. It is mildly interesting to know, for example, that time taken for reporting on economic achievements on the evening news has "contracted from 20 percent to only 13 percent of total newstime." Still, the question of change on Soviet television, and more generally of the place of Soviet television in the evolution of Soviet politics and identity, could do with more, well, vision.

The story is not yet complete. The Soviet airwaves are still clogged with painfully dull variety shows, and there are occasional leaps backward to the bad old days. In the midst of the battle between Armenia and Azerbaijan over the autonomous region of Nagorno-Karabakh, Moscow unleashed Genrikh Borovik, one of its old-guard propagandists, to produce a documentary. The news of the recent Politburo re-shuffle was broadcast with Brezhnevian stiltedness, a depressing reminder that *glasnost* is by no means guaranteed.

The Bolshevik state was born in a vacuum of authority. Lenin and his tiny party asserted authority first with propaganda, then with terror. Khrushchev and Gorbachev together have done a great deal to put an end to political terror. Whether the state has the confidence and the courage to do without propaganda, and really air a multitude of voices and pictures, will be something to watch. On television.

DAVID REMNICK

David Remnick is Moscow correspondent for the *Washington Post*.

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TRB, *from page 4*

what it costs. The extent to which society relieves individuals of these costs is exactly the extent to which society must pay the costs itself. Bush has proposed nothing to make health care or college any cheaper to provide. Both of Dukakis's schemes might unleash fierce price inflation in their respective sectors, but this is a problem inherent in any government guarantee to cover the cost of some service. If Bush has a solution to this problem, he's keeping it to himself.

Although there isn't much flesh on the bones of Bush's proposals, it's still possible to contrast his style of liberalism with Dukakis's. Oddly, Dukakis by comparison is the restrained, pragmatic "neoliberal" while Bush comes off as an unreconstructed liberal of the old school. Dukakis seems less "liberal" than Bush in two ways.

First, Dukakis's proposed extensions of the welfare state are self-financing. His college tuition program would pay for itself through a Social Security tax surcharge. It would also be voluntary: anyone who did not wish to be subjected to this new tax would not have to participate in the program. If Dukakis's mandatory insurance idea is, in effect, a back-door tax on employers, at least it is a tax that will exactly pay for the program it is intended to finance. By contrast Bush's tax-free savings scheme would drain hundreds of millions from the Treasury, his "buy into Medicaid" notion is a multibillion-dollar black hole, and he refuses to say where the revenue for either one would come from.

Second, on health care at least, Bush wants more big government while Dukakis prefers to work through the private sector. Bush calls Dukakis's mandatory employee insurance "socialized medicine pure and simple." But his alternative is apparently to add those same millions of currently uninsured people to the government health dole. Under Dukakis's scheme, employers could shop around for the best health care deal; providers and insurers would have to compete for their business. Under Bush's scheme, there is no competition; a government agency pays the bills. Which idea sounds more costly? Which sounds more like "socialized medicine"?

Try again, George. Real liberals have been at this game a long time, and some have even learned a thing or two. When the amateurs start playing, that's when the trouble starts. □

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CORRESPONDENCE, *from page 5*

REAL DEMOCRATS

To the editors:

The real reason moderate Democrats have failed to bolt en masse into the waiting arms of the Republican Party has little to do with Morton M. Kondracke's suggestion "that the Republicans at bottom have failed to be true to themselves as conservatives" ("Hanging In There," August 29). Even if the Republicans had proved themselves to be crystalline-pure conservatives on foreign policy and economic matters, most Democrats would still find their positions on fundamental social issues intolerable. Be it abortion, school prayer, civil rights, a true Democrat cannot avoid the deeply emotional conviction that the Republican Party represents a viewpoint that is insensitive, anachronistic, and just plain wrong. Although it is maddening for moderate Democrats to watch as the left wing tries to pull our party toward advocacy of unilateral disarmament or blind faith in the Sandinistas, when all is said and done we are much more comfortable in a party that is able to embrace a Jesse Jackson than in a party that is able to embrace a Jesse Helms.

DAVE BASSETT
Indianapolis, Indiana

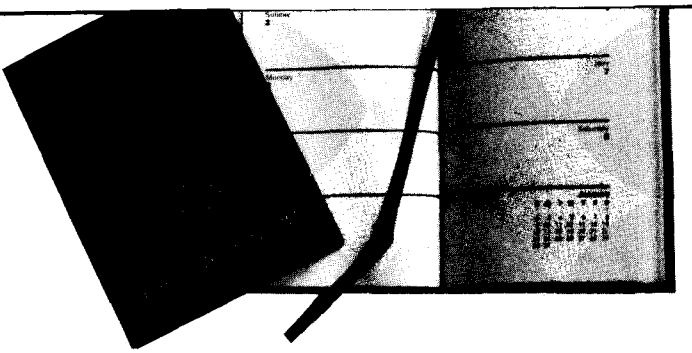
OVEREXTENDED CREDIT

To the editors:

"Frank Mankiewicz's great crack," reported so gleefully in the Washington Diarist ("Just Following Orders," October 3), is not so great because it is not original, and possibly not so by more than 200 years. Like speeches by Senator Joe Biden, Mankiewicz's prose may have an unacknowledged British origin. Samuel Johnson is credited with having noted that the Scots who then migrated south to England raised the intelligence levels of both countries. In subsequent years, the same formulation has been advanced to describe comparable mutual benefits that accrue to the United States and Canada when Canadians transplant themselves to this country.

You have given Mr. Mankiewicz credit (if plagiarism, unwitting or not, is now credit-worthy) where no credit is due.

DAVID HEAPS
Princeton, New Jersey



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CAMBRIDGE DIARIST

Symbolic Politics

NO ONE HAS accused Michael Dukakis of being drawn to the grand gesture. In his own niggling legalistic way, however, he has been a practitioner of symbolic politics, I fear fatally. Bush could make his obscene fuss about the Pledge because Dukakis had done so first, from the opposite point of view. Around the country, surely, there are many First Amendment absolutists whose enthusiasm for the Duke derives primarily from their belief that he has made Massachusetts that rare enlightened jurisdiction where schoolchildren don't suffer the indignity of having to recite the Pledge each morning. Doubtless there are many more people who will vote against him in the same belief. But the fact is that most students in the Commonwealth's public schools begin each day with the salute to the flag. Among these students and their teachers, there must be some who do so under duress and in offense to conscience. Such pressure, moreover, is not limited to the Pledge. Children from morally conservative families are obliged to attend classes in sex education. Teachers who believe that God created heaven and earth, monkey and man, have no option but to teach Darwinian evolution. This is not only unavoidable, it is also just: state schools are the pulpits of the civil religion, a faith often affected by the zeitgeist. The historical liberal animus against church and private schools was precisely because they separated their students from common values and national purposes. Of course, liberals long ago lost confidence in these norms. That is one reason many of them squirm during rituals of patriotic piety. Given this, how did the ritual of the Pledge survive the now famous Dukakis veto? What the veto actually did was to embolden teachers who take umbrage at the Pledge not to lead their pupils in it. There are schools where some teachers do and some teachers don't. But teacher sovereignty in the classroom is not a principle of civil liberties. Dukakis chose to make it one because it would give him a symbolic victory in Cambridge and Brookline, his literal and ideological habitat, whose more cosmopolitan inhabitants are eager to show that they and the place they live in have somehow transcended the loyalties to which men and women are born. What wins applause there, however, earns hisses elsewhere.

SYMBOLIC POLITICS was also at stake when Governor Dukakis decided to keep the commonwealth free of radio towers for the Ground Wave Emergency Network, a cross-country communications system fundamental to the idea and the reality of deterrence. Dukakis didn't actually cripple GWEN. Installations could be placed in neighboring states. The point was to strike a symbolic blow against what he argued was the illusion of nuclear safety. As with his effort to keep the Massachusetts National Guard out of training maneuvers in Honduras, this attempt at an independent foreign policy for his state smacks of the old pre-Confederate doctrine of interposition, last revived in our time by George Wallace and Orval Faubus and other racist governors resisting integration. Since Atlanta Dukakis has had a foxhole conversion to belief in deterrence. But his showboating on GWEN haunts him, raising the specter that his nuclear guru may well be Dr. Helen Caldicott, the hysteric who recently told a Democratic fund-raiser in California that Mikhail Gorbachev is very much like Jesus Christ. Dukakis is apparently still too smug to concede he was wrong about GWEN. And he certainly hasn't informed the Pentagon that Massachusetts is willing to return to the Union.

I WENT TO SEE *A World Apart*, the second of the recent epics about the struggle against apartheid in South Africa. This one also focuses on a white opponent of the regime, a fictionalized version of the real-life Ruth First put on the screen by her daughter, Shawn Slovo. The film is coy about its protagonist's Communist loyalties, as if honesty on this point would compromise the moral argument against apartheid itself. The movie is not coy about the screenwriter's view of her mother as mother. A Bertolt Brecht poem once lamented, in a brutal self-reproach to the morally blinding monomania of Communist politics: "we who wished to lay the foundations of kindness / could not ourselves be kind." This militant couldn't even be kind to her own children. Hers is a textured portrait. This is more than can be said about the movie's blacks. As in *Cry Freedom*, the film that purports to be about Steve Biko but is really about a white newspaperman, Donald Woods, blacks are portrayed as undifferentiated stick figures, uniformly kind even when they raise their clenched fists and shout slogans. I'm weary of films about how a few heroic whites fight apartheid. It's time for a movie about the targeted objects of apartheid, the blacks and other nonwhites on whom the defeat of this ugly system of human control ultimately depends and who for decades have borne the burden of defiance.

THE BROTHERS MALONE were hired a decade ago as firefighters in the Boston Fire Department after claiming descent from a black great-grandmother so as to be eligible for racial preference. The Malones could not score high enough on the qualifying exam to be admitted as whites, but they were smart enough to figure out how to get around that little impediment. Now the department challenges their racial claim. Even though the Malones have fair complexions it will be hard to prove that their great-grandmother wasn't black. The local black political class is up in arms over white poaching on black employment turf. But why should even someone who really *is* one-eighth black be favored over someone who is all white? And fractional minorities are not the only dubious winners in the new wheel of fortune genetic jackpot. I know rich Hispanic expatriates who have benefitted from affirmative action for Hispanics. They think it's a joke, and they're right.

I WRITE BEFORE the Bentsen-Quayle debate, but I fear the Democrats may have erred in portraying Quayle in advance as a blithering idiot. In 1962, when Carl Hayden at age 85 ran his last race for senator from Arizona, he spent most of the campaign in a hospital bed. The Republicans put out the rumor that he was actually dead—a not-implausible accusation. However, the Democrats brought TV cameras into Hayden's hospital room. The old man, stretched out gaunt, lifted his right hand from his bed. He was alive. The Republicans had made the voters' expectations too low. Hayden swept to victory.

MARTIN PERETZ

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